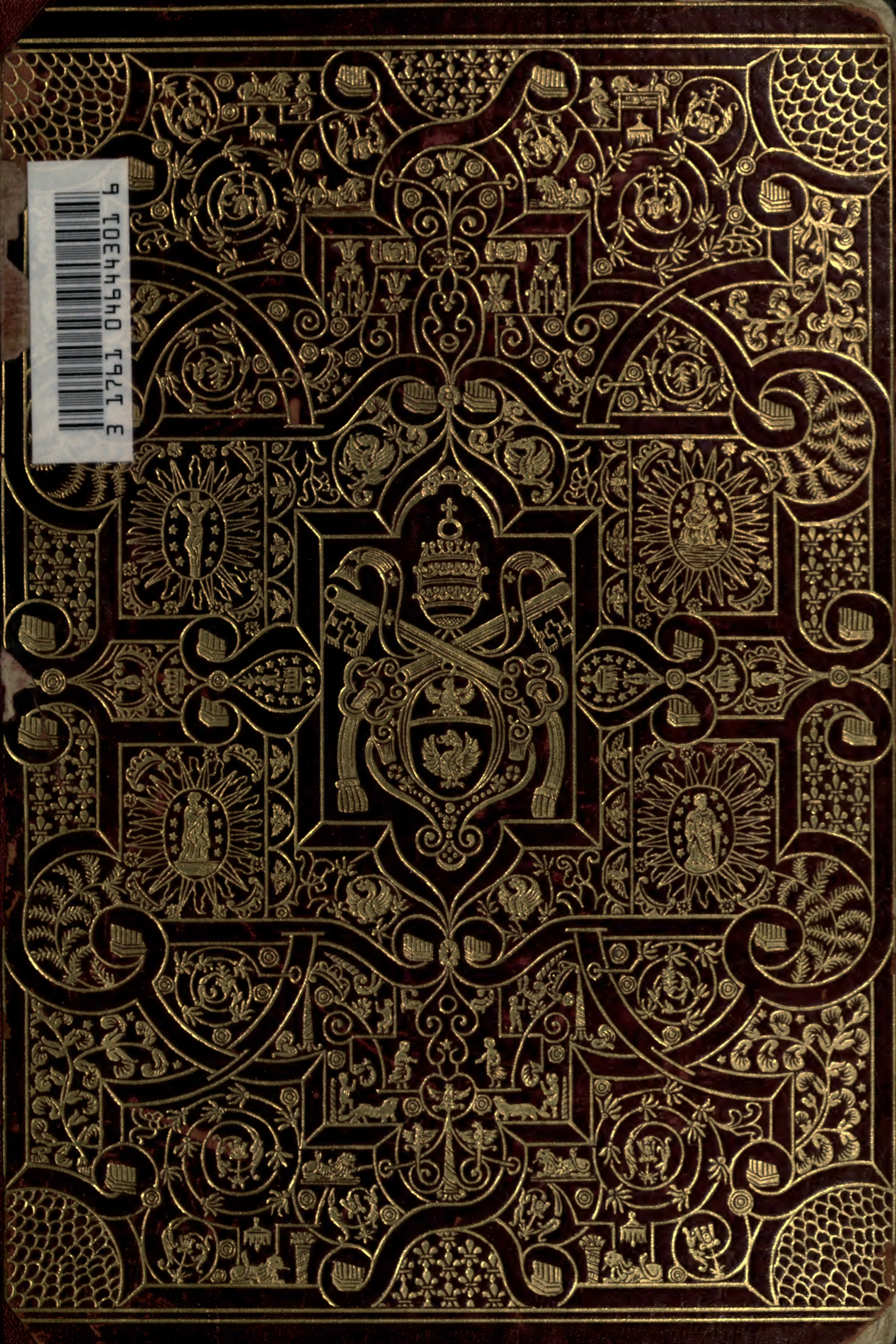

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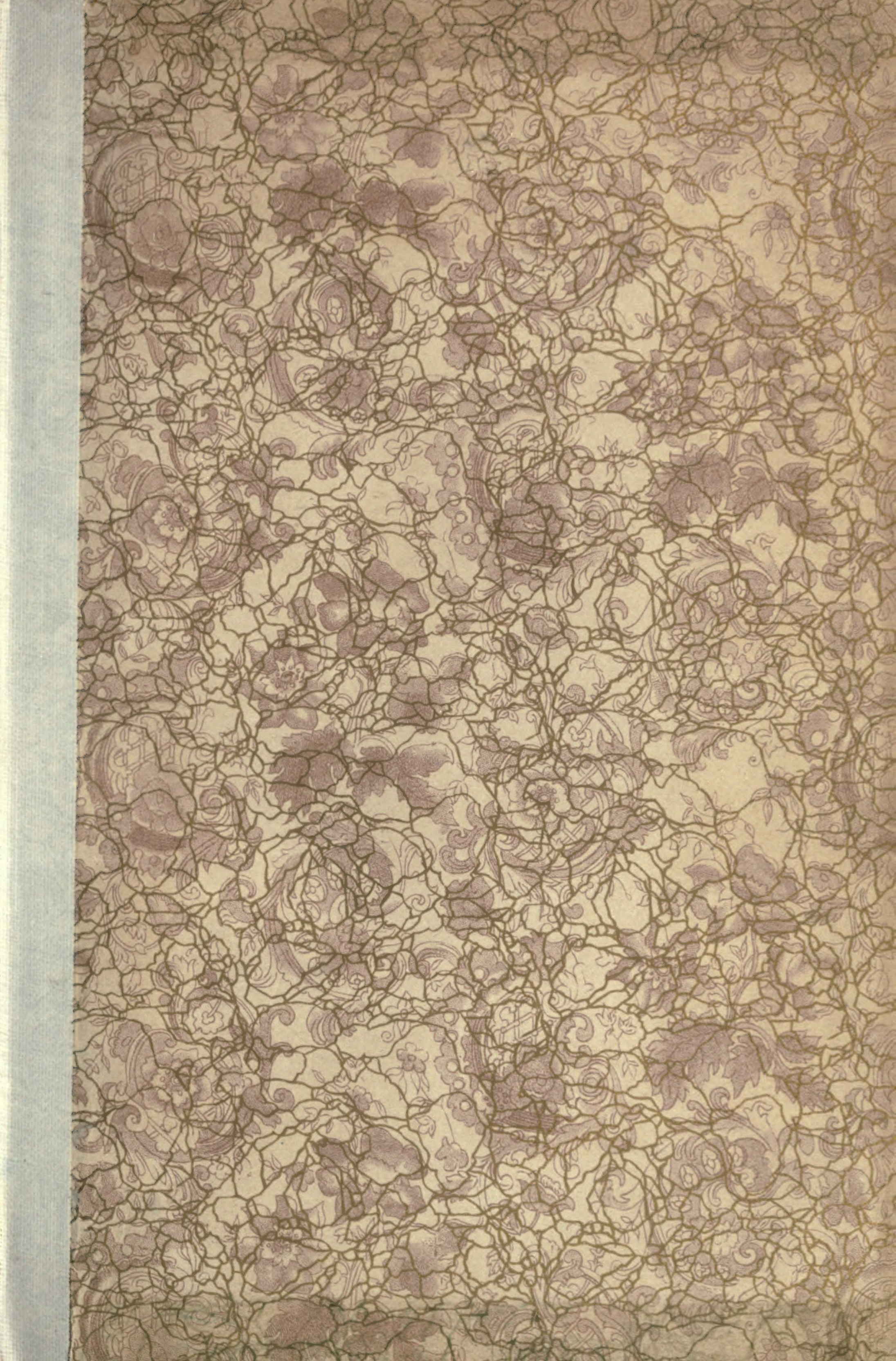

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ANGLO-SAXON CLASSICS

NORRŒNA

EMBRACING

The History and Romance of Northern Europe

RASMUS B. ANDERSON, LL.D.
EDITOR IN CHIEF

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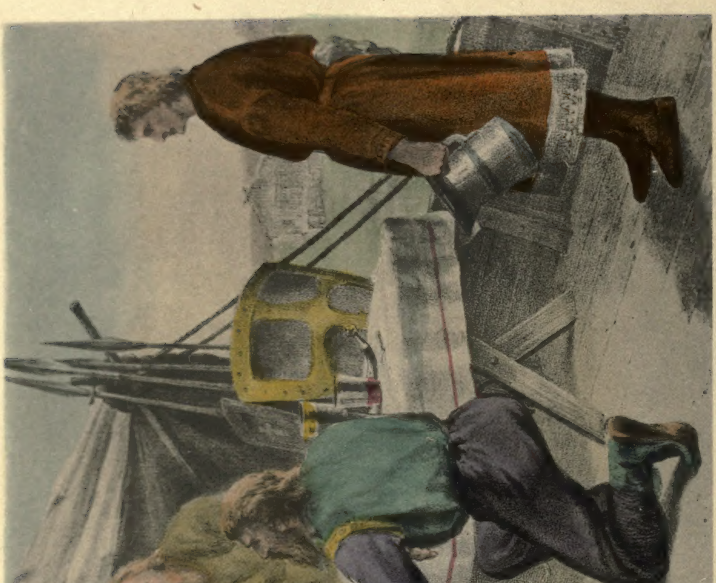

FRODE HUMBLES HIMSELF BEFORE ERIK.

(From the Painting by P. N. Arbo.)

ONE of the greatest and most magnanimous characters in Saxo's history is Erik, son of Ragnar, king of Sweden. Among other of his valorous deeds was that of conquering Frode, king of Denmark, who was so humiliated by his defeat that he threatened to destroy himself; but Erik generously restored Frode to his former dignity which so elated the king that he betrothed his sister to the victor and bestowed upon him many honors.

[redacted]

THE NINE BOOKS
OF
THE DANISH HISTORY
OF
Saxo Grammaticus

IN TWO VOLUMES

TRANSLATED BY
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WITH SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON SAXO'S SOURCES, HISTORICAL METHODS, AND FOLK-LORE

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BOOK V.

(*Continued from Vol. I.*)

The king prepared to give them chase with his mutilated ships, but soon the waves broke through; and though he was very heavily laden with his armour, he began to swim off among the rest, having become more anxious to save his own life than to attack that of others. The bows plunged over into the sea, the tide flooded in and swept the rowers from their seats. When Erik and Roller saw this they instantly flung themselves into the deep water, spurning danger, and by swimming picked up the king, who was tossing about. Thrice the waves had poured over him and borne him down when Erik caught him by the hair, and lifted him out of the sea. The remaining crowd of the wrecked either sank in the waters, or got with trouble to the land. The king was stripped of his dripping attire and swathed round with dry garments, and the water poured in floods from his chest as he kept belching it; his voice also seemed to fail under the exhaustion of continual pantings. At last heat was restored to his limbs, which were numbed with cold, and his breathing became quicker. He had not fully got back his strength, and could sit but not rise. Gradually his native force returned. But when he was asked at last whether he sued for life and grace, he put his hand to his eyes, and strove to lift up their downcast gaze. But as, little by little, power came back to his body, and as his voice became more assured, he said:

"By this light, which I am loth to look on, by this heaven which I behold and drink in with little joy, I beseech and conjure you not to persuade me to use either any more. I wished to die; ye have saved me in vain. I was not allowed to perish in the waters; at least I will die by the sword. I was unconquered before; thine, Erik, was the first wit to which I yielded: I was all the more unhappy, because I had never been beaten by men of note, and now I let a low-born man defeat me. This is great cause for a king to be ashamed. This is a good and sufficient reason for a general to die; it is right that he should care for nothing so much as glory. If he want that, then take it that he lacks all else. For nothing about a king is more on men's lips than his repute. I was credited with the height of understanding and eloquence. But I have been stripped of both the things wherein I was thought to excel, and am all the more miserable because I, the conqueror of kings, am seen conquered by a peasant. Why grant life to him whom thou hast robbed of honour? I have lost sister, realm, treasure, household gear, and, what is greater than them all, renown: I am luckless in all chances, and in all thy good fortune is confessed. Why am I to be kept to live on for all this ignominy? What freedom can be so happy for me that it can wipe out all the shame of captivity? What will all the following time bring for me? It can beget nothing but long remorse in my mind, and will savour only of past woes. What will prolonging of life avail, if it only brings back the memory of sorrow? To the stricken nought is pleasanter than death, and that decease is happy which comes at a man's wish, for it cuts not short any sweetness of his days, but annihilates his disgust at all things. Life in prosperity, but death in adversity, is best to seek. No hope of better things tempts me to long for life. What hap can quite repair my shattered fortunes? And by now, had ye not rescued me in my peril, I should have forgotten even these. What though thou shouldst give me back my realm, restore my sister, and renew my treasure? thou canst never repair my renown. Nothing that is patched up can have the lustre of the unimpaired, and rumour will recount for ages that Frode was taken captive. Moreover, if ye reckon the calamities I have inflicted on you, I have deserved to die at your hands; if ye recall the harms I have done, ye will repent your kindness. Ye will be ashamed of having aided a foe, if ye consider how savagely he treated you. Why do ye spare the guilty? Why do ye stay your hand from the throat of your persecutor? It is fitting that the lot which I had prepared for you should come home to myself. I own that if I had happened to have you in my power as ye now have me, I should have paid no heed to compassion. But if I am innocent before you in act, I am guilty at least in will. I pray you, let my wrongful intention, which sometimes is counted to stand for the deed, recoil upon me. If ye refuse me death by the sword I will take care to kill myself with my own hand."

Erik rejoined thus: "I pray that the gods may turn thee from the folly of thy purpose; turn thee, I say, that thou mayst not try to end a most glorious life abominably. Why, surely the gods themselves have forbidden that a man who is kind to others should commit unnatural self-murder. Fortune has tried thee to find out with what spirit thou wouldst meet adversity. Destiny has proved thee, not brought thee low. No sorrow has been inflicted on thee which a happier lot cannot efface. Thy prosperity has not been changed; only a warning has been given thee. No man behaves with self-control in prosperity who has not learnt to endure adversity. Besides, the whole use of blessings is reaped after misfortunes have been graciously acknowledged. Sweeter is the joy which follows on the bitterness of fate. Wilt thou shun thy life because thou hast once had a drenching, and the waters closed over thee? But if the waters can crush thy spirit, when wilt thou with calm courage bear the sword? Who would not reckon swimming away in his armour more to his glory than to his shame? How many men would think themselves happy were they unhappy with thy fortune? The sovereignty is still thine; thy courage is in its prime; thy years are ripening; thou canst hope to compass more than thou hast yet achieved. I would not find thee fickle enough to wish, not only to shun hardships, but also to fling away thy life, because thou couldst not bear them. None is so unmanly as he who from fear of adversity loses heart to live. No wise man makes up for his calamities by dying. Wrath against another is foolish, but against a man's self it is foolhardy; and it is a coward frenzy which dooms its owner. But if thou go without need to thy death for some wrong suffered, or for some petty perturbation of spirit, whom dost thou leave behind to avenge thee? Who is so mad that he would wish to punish the fickleness of fortune by destroying himself? What man has lived so prosperously but that ill fate has sometimes stricken him? Hast thou enjoyed felicity unbroken and passed thy days without a shock, and now, upon a slight cloud of sadness, dost thou prepare to quit thy life, only to save thy anguish? If thou bear trifles so ill, how shalt thou endure the heavier frowns of fortune? Callow is the man who has never tasted of the cup of sorrow; and no man who has not suffered hardships is temperate in enjoying ease. Wilt thou, who shouldst have been a pillar of courage, show a sign of a palsied spirit? Born of a brave sire, wilt thou display utter impotence? Wilt thou fall so far from thy ancestors as to turn softer than women? Hast thou not yet begun thy prime, and art thou already taken with weariness of life? Whoever set such an example before? Shall the grandson of a famous man, and the child of the unvanquished, be too weak to endure a slight gust of adversity? Thy nature portrays the courage of thy sires; none has conquered thee, only thine own heedlessness has hurt thee, We snatched thee from peril, we did not subdue thee; wilt thou give us hatred for love, and set our friendship down as wrongdoing? Our service should have appeased thee, and not troubled thee. May the gods never desire thee to go so far in frenzy, as to persist in branding thy preserver as a traitor! Shall we be guilty before thee in a matter wherein we do thee good? Shall we draw anger on us for our service? Wilt thou account him thy foe whom thou hast to thank for thy life? For thou wert not free when we took thee, but in distress, and we came in time to help thee. And, behold, I restore thy treasure, thy wealth, thy goods. If thou thinkest thy sister was betrothed to me over-hastily, let her marry the man whom thou commandest; for her chastity remains inviolate. Moreover, if thou wilt accept me, I wish to fight for thee. Beware lest thou wrongfully steel thy mind in anger. No loss of power has shattered thee, none of thy freedom has been forfeited. Thou shalt see that I am obeying, not commanding thee. I agree to any sentence thou mayst pronounce against my life. Be assured that thou art as strong here as in thy palace; thou hast the same power to rule here as in thy court. Enact concerning us here whatsoever would have been thy will in the palace: we are ready to obey." Thus much said Erik.

Now this speech softened the king towards himself as much as towards his foe. Then, everything being arranged and made friendly, they returned to the shore. The king ordered that Erik and his sailors should be taken in carriages. But when they reached the palace he had an assembly summoned, to which he called Erik, and under the pledge of betrothal gave him his sister and command over a hundred men. Then he added that the queen would be a weariness to him, and that the daughter of Gotar had taken his liking. He must, therefore, have a fresh embassy, and the business could best be done by

Erik, for whose efforts nothing seemed too hard. He also said that he would stone Gotwar to death for her complicity in concealing the crime; but Hanund he would restore to her father, that he might not have a traitress against his life dwelling amongst the Danes. Erik approved his plans, and promised his help to carry out his bidding; except that he declared that it would be better to marry the queen, when she had been put away, to Roller, of whom his sovereignty need have no fears. This opinion Frode received reverentially, as though it were some lesson vouchsafed from above. The queen also, that she might not seem to be driven by compulsion, complied, as women will, and declared that there was no natural necessity to grieve, and that all distress of spirit was a creature of fancy: and, moreover, that one ought not to bewail the punishment that befell one's deserts. And so the brethren celebrated their marriages together, one wedding the sister of the king, and the other his divorced queen.

Then they sailed back to Norway, taking their wives with them. For the women could not be torn from the side of their husbands, either by distance of journey or by dread of peril, but declared that they would stick to their lords like a feather to something shaggy. They found that Ragnar was dead, and that Kraka had already married one Brak. Then they remembered the father's treasure, dug up the money, and bore it off. But Erik's fame had gone before him, and Gotar had learnt all his good fortune. Now when Gotar learnt that he had come himself, he feared that his immense self-confidence would lead him to plan the worst against the Norwegians, and was anxious to take his wife from him and marry him to his own daughter in her place: for his queen had just died, and he was anxious to marry the sister of Frode more than anyone. Erik, when he learnt of his purpose, called his men together, and told them that his fortune had not yet got off from the reefs. Also he said that he saw, that as a bundle that was not tied by a band fell to pieces, so likewise the heaviest punishment that was not constrained on a man by his own fault suddenly collapsed. They had experienced this of late with Frode; for they saw how at the hardest pass their innocence had been protected by the help of the gods; and if they continued to preserve it they should hope for like aid in their adversity. Next, they must pretend flight for a little while, if they were attacked by Gotar, for so they would have a juster plea for fighting. For they had every right to thrust out the hand in order to shield the head from peril. Seldom could a man carry to a successful end a battle he had begun against the innocent; so, to give them a better plea for assaulting the enemy, he must be provoked to attack them first.

Erik then turned to Gunwar, and asked her, in order to test her fidelity, whether she had any love for Gotar, telling her it was unworthy that a maid of royal lineage should be bound to the bed of a man of the people. Then she began to conjure him earnestly by the power of heaven to tell her whether his purpose was true or feigned? He said that he had spoken seriously, and she cried: "And so thou art prepared to bring on me the worst of shame by leaving me a widow, whom thou lovedst dearly as a maid! Common rumour often speaks false, but I have been wrong in my opinion of thee. I thought I had married a steadfast man; I hoped his loyalty was past question; but now I find him to be more fickle than the winds." Saying this, she wept abundantly.

Dear to Erik was his wife's fears; presently he embraced her and said: "I wished to know how loyal thou wert to me. Nought but death has the right to sever us, but Gotar means to steal thee away, seeking thy love by robbery. When he has committed the theft, pretend it is done with thy goodwill; yet put off the wedding till he has given me his daughter in thy place. When she has been granted, Gotar and I will hold our marriage on the same day. And take care that thou prepare rooms for our banqueting which have a common party-wall, yet are separate: lest perchance, if I were before thine eyes, thou shouldst ruffle the king with thy lukewarm looks at him. For this will be a most effective trick to baffle the wish of the ravisher." Then he bade Brak (one of his men), to lie in ambush not far from the palace with a chosen band of his quickest men, that he might help him at need.

Then he summoned Roller, and fled in his ship with his wife and all his goods, in order to tempt the king out, pretending panic. So, when he saw that the fleet of Gotar was pressing him hard, he said: "Behold how the bow of guile shooteth the shaft of treachery;" and instantly rousing his sailors with the war-shout, he steered the ship about. Gotar came close up to him and asked who was the pilot of the ship, and he was told that it was

Erik. He also shouted a question whether he was the same man who by his marvellous speaking could silence the eloquence of all other men. Erik, when he heard this, replied that he had long since received the surname of the "Shrewd-spoken," and that he had not won the auspicious title for nothing. Then both went back to the nearest shore, where Gotar, when he learnt the mission of Erik, said that he wished for the sister of Frode, but would rather offer his own daughter to Frode's envoy, that Erik might not repent the passing of his own wife to another man. Thus it would not be unfitting for the fruit of the mission to fall to the ambassador.

Erik, he said, was delightful to him as a son-in-law, if only he could win alliance with Frode through Gunwar.

Erik lauded the kindness of the king and approved his judgment, declaring he could not have expected a greater thing from the immortal gods than what was now offered him unasked. Still, he said, the king must first discover Gunwar's own mind and choice. She accepted the flatteries of the king with feigned goodwill, and seemed to consent readily to his suit, but besought him to suffer Erik's nuptials to precede hers; because, if Erik's were accomplished first, there would be a better opportunity for the king's; but chiefly on this account, that, if she were to marry again, she might not be disgusted at her new marriage troth by the memory of the old recurring. She also declared it inexpedient for two sets of preparations to be confounded in one ceremony. The king was prevailed upon by her answers, and highly approved her requests.

Gotar's constant talks with Erik furnished him with a store of most fairshapen maxims, wherewith to rejoice and refresh his mind. So, not satisfied with giving him his daughter in marriage he also made over to him the district of Lither, thinking that their connection deserved some kindness. Now Kraka, whom Erik, because of her cunning in witchcraft, had brought with him on his travels, feigned weakness of the eyes, and muffled up her face in her cloak, so that not a single particle of her head was visible for recognition. When people asked her who she was, she said that she was Gunwar's sister, child of the same mother but a different father.

Now when they came to the dwelling of Gotar, the wedding-feast of Alfhild (this was his daughter's name) was being held. Erik and the king sat at meat in different rooms, with a party-wall in common, and also entirely covered on the inside with hanging tapestries. Gunwar sat by Gotar, but Erik sat close between Kraka on the one side and Alfhild on the other. Amid the merrymaking, he gradually drew a lath out of the wall, and made an opening large enough to allow the passage of a human body; and thus, without the knowledge of the guests, he made a space wide enough to go through. Then, in the course of the feast, he began to question his betrothed closely whether she would rather marry himself or Frode: especially since, if due heed were paid to matches, the daughter of a king ought to go to the arms of one as noble as herself, so that the lowliness of one of the pair might not impair the lordliness of the other. She said that she would never marry against the permission of her father; but he turned her aversion into compliance by promises that she should be queen, and that she should be richer than all other women, for she was captivated by the promise of wealth quite as much as of glory. There is also a tradition that Kraka turned the maiden's inclinations to Frode by a drink which she mixed and gave to her.

Now Gotar, after the feast, in order to make the marriage-mirth go fast and furious, went to the revel of Erik. As he passed out, Gunwar, as she had been previously bidden, went through the hole in the party-wall where the lath had been removed, and took the seat next to Erik. Gotar marvelled that she was sitting there by his side, and began to ask eagerly how and why she had come there. She said that she was Gunwar's sister, and that the king was deceived by the likeness of their looks. And when the king, in order to look into the matter, hurried back to the royal room, Gunwar returned through the back door by which she had come and sat in her old place in the sight of all. Gotar, when he saw her, could scarcely believe his eyes, and in the utmost doubt whether he had recognized her aright, he retraced his steps to Erik; and there he saw before him Gunwar, who had got back in her own fashion. And so, as often as he changed to go from one hall to the other, he found her whom he sought in either place. By this time the king was tormented by great wonder at what was no mere likeness, but the very same face in both places. For it seemed flatly impossible that different people should look exactly and undistinguishably alike. At last, when the revel broke up, he courteously escorted his daughter and Erik as far as their room, as the manner is at weddings, and went back himself to bed elsewhere.

But Erik suffered Alfhild, who was destined for Frode, to lie apart, and embraced Gunwar as usual, thus outwitting the king. So Gotar passed a sleepless night, revolving how he had been apparently deluded with a dazed and wandering mind: for it seemed to him no mere likeness of looks, but sameness. Thus he was filled with such wavering and doubtful judgment, that though he really discerned the truth he thought he must have been mistaken. At last it flashed across his mind that the wall might have been tampered with. He gave orders that it should be carefully surveyed and examined, but found no traces of a breakage: in fact, the entire room seemed to be whole and unimpaired. For Erik, early in the night, had patched up the damage of the broken wall, that his trick might not be detected. Then the king sent two men privily into the bedroom of Erik to learn the truth, and bade them stand behind the hangings and note all things carefully. They further received orders to kill Erik if they found him with Gunwar. They went secretly into the room, and, concealing themselves in the curtained corners, beheld Erik and Gunwar in bed together with arms entwined. Thinking them only drowsy, they waited for their deeper sleep, wishing to stay until a heavier slumber gave them a chance to commit their crime. Erik snored lustily, and they knew it was a sure sign that he slept soundly; so they straightway came forth with drawn blades in order to butcher him. Erik was awakened by their treacherous onset, and seeing their swords hanging over his head, called out the name of his stepmother, (Kraka), to which long ago he had been bidden to appeal when in peril, and he found a speedy help in his need. For his shield, which hung aloft from the rafter, instantly fell and covered his unarmed body, and, as if on purpose, covered it from impalement by the cutthroats. He did not fail to make use of his luck, but, snatching his sword, lopped off both feet of the nearest of them. Gunwar, with equal energy, ran a spear through the other: she had the body of a woman, but the spirit of a man.

Thus Erik escaped the trap; whereupon he went back to the sea and made ready to sail off by night. But Roller sounded on his horn the signal for those who had been bidden to watch close by, to break into the palace. When the king heard this, he thought it meant that the enemy was upon them, and made off hastily in a ship. Meanwhile Brak, and those who had broken in with him, snatched up the goods of the king, and got them on board Erik's ships. Almost half the night was spent in pillaging. In the morning, when the king found that they had fled, he prepared to pursue them, but was advised by one of his friends not to plan anything on a sudden or do it in haste. His friend, indeed, tried to convince him that he needed a larger equipment, and that it was ill-advised to pursue the fugitives to Denmark with a handful. But neither could this curb the king's impetuous spirit; it could not bear the loss; for nothing had stung him more than this, that his preparations to slay another should have recoiled on his own men. So he sailed to the harbour which is now called Omi. Here the weather began to be bad, provision failed, and they thought it better, since die they must, to die by the sword than by famine. And so the sailors turned their hand against one another, and hastened their end by mutual blows. The king with a few men took to the cliffs and escaped. Lofty barrows still mark the scene of the slaughter. Meanwhile Erik ended his voyage fairly, and the wedding of Alfhild and Frode was kept.

Then came tidings of an inroad of the Sclavs, and Erik was commissioned to suppress it with eight ships, since Frode as yet seemed inexperienced in war. Erik, loth ever to flinch from any manly undertaking, gladly undertook the business and did it bravely. Learning that the pirates had seven ships, he sailed up to them with only one of his own, ordering the rest to be girt with timber parapets, and covered over with pruned boughs of trees. Then he advanced to observe the number of the enemy more fully, but when the Sclavs pursued closely, he beat a quick retreat to his men. But the enemy, blind to the trap, and as eager to take the fugitives, rowed smiting the waters fast and incessantly. For the ships of Erik could not be clearly distinguished, looking like a leafy wood. The enemy, after venturing into a winding strait, suddenly saw themselves surrounded by the fleet of Erik. First, confounded by the strange sight, they thought that a wood was sailing; and then they saw that guile lurked under the leaves. Therefore, tardily repenting their rashness, they tried to retrace their incautious voyage: but while they were trying to steer about, they saw the enemy boarding them; Erik, however, put his ship ashore, and slung stones against the enemy from afar. Thus most of the Sclavs were killed, and forty taken, who afterwards under stress of bonds and famine, and in strait of divers torments, gave up the ghost.

Meantime Frode, in order to cross on an expedition into Sclavia, had mustered a mighty fleet from the Danes, as well as from neighbouring peoples. The smallest boat of this fleet could carry twelve sailors, and be rowed by as many oars. Then Erik, bidding his men await him patiently went to tell Frode the tidings of the defeat he had inflicted. As he sailed along he happened to see a pirate ship aground on some shallows; and being wont to utter weighty words upon chance occurrences, he said, "Obscure is the lot of the base-born, and mean is the fortune of the lowly." Then he brought his ship up close and destroyed the pirates, who were trying to get off their own vessel with poles, and busily engrossed in saving her. This accomplished, he made his way back to the king's fleet; and wishing to cheer Frode with a greeting that heralded his victory, he said, "Hail to the maker of a most prosperous peace!" The king prayed that his word might come true, and declared that the spirit of the wise man was prophetic. Erik answered that he spoke truly, and that the petty victory brought an omen of a greater one; declaring that a presage of great matters could often be got from trifles. Then the king counselled him to scatter his force, and ordered the horsemen of Jutland to go by the land way, while the rest of the army went by the short sea-passage. But the sea was covered with such a throng of vessels, that there were not enough harbours to take them in, nor shores for them to encamp on, nor money for their provisions; while the land army is said to have been so great that, in order to shorten the way, it levelled mountains, made marshes passable, filled up pits with material, and the hugest chasms by casting in great boulders.

Meanwhile Strunik the King of the Sclavs sent envoys to ask for a truce; but Frode refused him time to equip himself, saying that an enemy ought not to be furnished with a truce. Moreover, he said, he had hitherto passed his life without experience of war, and now he ought not to delay its beginning by waiting in doubt; for the man that conducted his first campaign successfully might hope for as good fortune in the rest. For each side would take the augury afforded by the first engagements as a presage of the combat; since the preliminary successes of war were often a prophecy of the sequel. Erik commended the wisdom of the reply, declaring that the game ought to be played abroad just as it had been begun at home: meaning that the Danes had been challenged by the Sclavs. After these words he fought a furious battle, slew Strunik with the bravest of his race, and received the surrender of the rest. Then Frode called the Sclavs together, and proclaimed by a herald that any man among them who had been trained to theft or plunder should be speedily given up; promising that he would reward the character of such men with the highest honours. He also ordered that all of them, who were versed in evil arts should come forth to have their reward. This offer pleased the Sclavs: and some of them, tempted by their hopes of the gift, betrayed themselves with more avarice than judgment, before the others could make them known. These were misled by such great covetousness, that they thought less of shame than lucre, and accounted as their glory what was really their guilt. When these had given themselves up of their own will, he said: "Sclavs! this is the pest from which you must clear your land yourselves." And straightway he ordered the executioners to seize them, and had them fixed upon the highest gallows by the hand of their own countrymen. The punishers looked fewer than the punished. And thus the shrewd king, by refusing to those who owned their guilt the pardon which he granted to the conquered foe, destroyed almost the entire stock of the Sclavic race. Thus the longing for an undeserved reward was visited with a deserved penalty, and the thirst for an undue wage justly punished. I should think that these men were rightly delivered to their doom, who brought the peril on their own heads by speaking, when they could have saved their lives by the protection of silence.

The king, exalted by the honours of his fresh victory, and loth to seem less strong in justice than in battle, resolved to remodel his army by some new laws, some of which are retained by present usage, while others men have chosen to abolish for new ones. (*a*) For he decreed, when the spoil was divided, that each of the vanguard should receive a greater share than the rest of the soldiery: while he granted all gold that was taken to the generals (before whom the standards were always borne in battle) on account of their rank; wishing the common soldiers to be content with silver. He ordered that the arms should go to the champions, but the captured ships should pass to the common people, as the due of those who had the right of building and equipping vessels. (*b*) Also he forbade that anyone should venture to lock up his household goods, as he would receive double the value of any losses from the treasury of the king; but if anyone thought fit to keep it in locked coffers, he must pay the king a gold mark. (*c*) He also laid down that anyone who spared a thief should be punished as a thief. (*d*) Further, that the first man to flee in battle should forfeit all common rights. (*e*) But when he had returned into Denmark he wished to amend by good measures any corruption caused by the evil practices of Grep; and therefore granted women free choice in marriage, so that there might be no compulsory wedlock. And so he provided by law that women should be held duly married to those whom they had wedded without consulting their fathers. (*f*) But if a free woman agreed to marry a slave, she must fall to his rank, lose the blessing of freedom, and adopt the standing of a slave. (*g*) He also imposed on men the statute that they must marry any woman whom they had seduced. (*h*) He ordained that adulterers should be deprived of a member by the lawful husbands, so that continence might not be destroyed by shameful sins. (*i*) Also he ordained that if a Dane plundered another Dane, he should repay double, and be held guilty of a breach of the peace.

(*k*) And if any man were to take to the house of another anything which he had got by thieving, his host, if he shut the door of his house behind the man, should incur forfeiture of all his goods, and should be beaten in full assembly, being regarded as having made himself guilty of the same crime. (*l*) Also, whatsoever exile should turn enemy to his country, or bear a shield against his countrymen, should be punished with the loss of life and goods. (*m*) But if any man, from a contumacious spirit, were slack in fulfilling the orders of the king, he should be punished with exile. For, on an occasion of any sudden and urgent war, an arrow of wood, looking like iron, used to be passed on everywhere from man to man as a messenger. (*n*) But if any one of the commons went in front of the vanguard in battle, he was to rise from a slave into a freeman, and from a peasant into a nobleman; but if he were nobly-born already, he should be created a governor. So great a guerdon did valiant men earn of old; and thus did the ancients think noble rank the due of bravery. For it was thought that the luck a man had should be set down to his valour, and not his valour to his luck. (*o*) He also enacted that no dispute should be entered on with a promise made under oath and a gage deposited; but whosoever requested another man to deposit a gage against him should pay that man half a gold mark, on pain of severe bodily chastisement. For the king had foreseen that the greatest occasions of strife might arise from the depositing of gages. (*p*) But he decided that any quarrel whatsoever should be decided by the sword, thinking a combat of weapons more honourable than one of words. But if either of the combatants drew back his foot, and stepped out of the ring of the circle previously marked, he was to consider himself conquered, and suffer the loss of his case. But a man of the people, if he attacked a champion on any score, should be armed to meet him; but the champion should only fight with a truncheon an ell long. (*q*) Further, he appointed that if an alien killed a Dane, his death should be redressed by the slaying of two foreigners.

Meanwhile, Gotar, in order to punish Erik, equipped his army for war: and Frode, on the other side, equipped a great fleet to go against Norway. When both alike had put into Rennes-Isle, Gotar, terrified by the greatness of Frode's name, sent ambassadors to pray for peace. Erik said to them, "Shameless is the robber who is the first to seek peace, or ventures to offer it to the good. He who longs to win must struggle: blow must counter blow, malice repel malice."

Gotar listened attentively to this from a distance, and then said, as loudly as he could: "Each man fights for valour according as he remembers kindness." Erik said to him: "I have requited thy kindness by giving thee back counsel." By this speech he meant that his excellent advice was worth more than all manner of gifts. And, in order to show that Gotar was ungrateful for the counsel he had received, he said: "When thou desiredst to take my life and my wife, thou didst mar the look of thy fair example. Only the sword has the right to decide between us." Then Gotar attacked the fleet of the Danes; he was unsuccessful in the engagement, and slain.

Afterwards Roller received his realm from Frode as a gift; it stretched over seven provinces. Erik likewise presented Roller with the province which Gotar had once bestowed upon him. After these exploits Frode passed three years in complete and tranquil peace.

Meanwhile the King of the Huns, when he heard that his daughter had been put away, allied himself with Olmar, King of the Easterlings, and in two years equipped an armament against the Danes. So Frode levied an army not only of native Danes, but also of Norwegians and Sclavs. Erik, whom he had sent to spy out the array of the enemy, found Olmar, who had received the command of the fleet, not far from Russia; while the King of the Huns led the land forces. He addressed Olmar thus:

"What means, prithee, this strong equipment of war? Or whither dost thou speed, King Olmar, mighty in thy fleet?"

Olmar. "We are minded to attack the son of Fridleif. And who art thou, whose bold lips ask such questions?"

Erik. "Vain hope of conquering the unconquered hath filled thy heart; over Frode no man can prevail."

Olmar. "Whatsoever befalls, must once happen for the first time; and often enough the unexpected comes to pass."

By this saying he let him know that no man must put too much trust in fortune. Then Erik rode up to inspect the army of the Huns. As it passed by him, and he in turn by it, it showed its vanguard to the rising and its rear to the setting sun. So he asked those whom he met, who had the command of all those thousands. Hun, the King of the Huns, happened to see him, and heard that he had undertaken to reconnoitre, and asked what was the name of the questioner. Erik said he was the man who came everywhere and was found nowhere. Then the king, when an interpreter was brought, asked what work Frode was about. Erik replied, "Frode never waits at home for a hostile army, nor tarries in his house for his foe. For he who covets the pinnacle of another's power must watch and wake all night. No man has ever won a victory by snoring, and no wolf has ever found a carcase by lying asleep."

The king, perceiving that he was a cunning speaker of choice maxims, said: "Here, perchance, is that Erik who, as I have heard, accused my daughter falsely."

But Erik, when they were bidden to seize him instantly, said that it was unseemly for one man to be dragged off by many; and by this saying he not only appeased the mind of the king, but even inclined him to be willing to pardon him. But it was clear that this impunity came more from cunning than kindness; for the chief reason why he was let go was that he might terrify Frode by the report of their vast numbers. When he returned, Frode bad him relate what he had discovered, and he said that he had seen six kings each with his fleet; and that each of these fleets contained five thousand ships, each ship being known to hold three hundred rowers. Each millenary of the whole total he said consisted of four wings; now, since the full number of a wing is three hundred, he meant that a millenary should be understood to contain twelve hundred men. When Frode wavered in doubt what he could do against so many, and looked eagerly round for reinforcements, Erik said: "Boldness helps the righteous; a valiant dog must attack the bear; we want wolf-hounds, and not little unwarlike birds." This said, he advised Frode to muster his fleet. When it was drawn up they sailed off against the enemy; and so they fought and subdued the islands lying between Denmark and the East; and as they advanced thence, met some ships of the Ruthenian fleet. Frode thought it shameful to attack such a handful, but Erik said: "We must seek food from the gaunt and lean. He who falls shall seldom fatten, nor has that man the power to bite whom the huge sack has devoured." By this warning he cured the king of all shame about making an assault, and presently induced him to attack a small number with a throng; for he showed him that advantage must be counted before honour.

After this they went on to meet Olmar, who because of the slowness of his multitude preferred awaiting the enemy to attacking it; for the vessels of the Ruthenians seemed disorganized, and, owing to their size, not so well able to row. But not even did the force of his multitudes avail him. For the extraordinary masses of the Ruthenians were stronger in numbers than in bravery, and yielded the victory to the stout handful of the Danes.

When Frode tried to return home, his voyage encountered an unheard-of difficulty. For the crowds of dead bodies, and likewise the fragments of shields and spears, bestrewed the entire gulf of the sea, and tossed on the tide, so that the harbours were not only straitened, but stank. The vessels stuck, hampered amid the corpses. They could neither thrust off with oars, nor drive away with poles, the rotting carcases that floated around, or prevent, when they had put one away, another rolling up and driving against the fleet. You would have thought that a war had arisen with the dead, and there was a strange combat with the lifeless.

So Frode summoned the nations which he had conquered, and enacted (*a*) that any father of a family who had fallen in that war should be buried with his horse and all his arms and decorations. And if any body-snatcher, in his abominable covetousness, made an attempt on him, he was to suffer for it, not only with his life, but also with the loss of burial for his own body; he should have no barrow and no funeral. For he thought it just that he who despoiled another's ashes should be granted no burial, but should repeat in his own person the fate he had inflicted on another. He appointed that the body of a centurion or governor should receive funeral on a pyre built of his own ship. He ordered that the bodies of every ten pilots should be burnt together with a single ship, but that every earl or king that was killed should be put on his own ship and burnt with it. He wished this nice attention to be paid in conducting the funerals of the slain, because he wished to prevent indiscriminate obsequies. By this time all the kings of the Russians except Olmar and Dag had fallen in battle. (*b*) He also ordered the Russians to conduct their warfare in imitation of the Danes, and (*c*) never to marry a wife without buying her. He thought that bought marriages would have more security, believing that the troth which was sealed with a price was the safest. (*d*) Moreover, anyone who durst attempt the violation of a virgin was to be punished with the severance of his bodily parts, or else to requite the wrong of his intercourse with a thousand talents. (*e*) He also enacted that any man that applied himself to war, who aspired to the title of tried soldier, should attack a single man, should stand the attack of two, should only withdraw his foot a little to avoid three, but should not blush to flee from four. (*f*) He also proclaimed that a new custom concerning the pay of the soldiers should be observed by the princes under his sway. He ordered that each native soldier and housecarl should be presented in the winter season with three marks of silver, a common or hired soldier with two, a private soldier who had finished his service with only one. By this law he did injustice to valour, reckoning the rank of the soldiers and not their courage; and he was open to the charge of error in the matter, because he set familiar acquaintance above desert.

After this the king asked Erik whether the army of the Huns was as large as the forces of Olmar, and Erik answered in the following song:

"By Hercules, I came on a countless throng, a throng that neither earth nor wave could hold. Thick flared all their camp-fires, and the whole wood blazed up; the flame betokened a numberless array. The earth sank under the fraying of the horse-hoofs; creaking waggons rattled swiftly. The wheels rumbled, the driver rode upon the winds, so that the chariots sounded like thunder. The earth hardly bore the throngs of men-at-arms, speeding on confusedly; they trod it, but it could not bear their weight. I thought that the air crashed and the earth was shaken, so mighty was the motion of the stranger army. For I saw fifteen standards flickering at once; each of them had a hundred lesser standards, and after each of these could have been seen twenty; and the captains in their order were equal in number to the standards."

Now when Frode asked wherewithal he was to resist so many, Erik instructed him that he must return home and suffer the enemy first to perish of their own hugeness. His counsel was obeyed, the advice being approved as heartily as it was uttered. But the Huns went on through pathless deserts, and, finding provisions nowhere, began to run the risk of general starvation; for it was a huge and swampy district, and nothing could be found to relieve their want. At last, when the beasts of burden had been cut down and eaten, they began to scatter, lacking carriages as much as food. Now their straying from the road was as perilous to them as their hunger. Neither horses nor asses were spared, nor did they refrain from filthy garbage. At last they did not even spare dogs: to dying men every abomination was lawful; for there is nothing too hard for the bidding of extreme need. At last when they were worn out with hunger, there came a general mortality. Bodies were carried out for burial without end, for all feared to perish, and none pitied the perishing. Fear indeed had cast out humanity. So first the divisions deserted from the king little by little; and then the army melted away by companies. He was also deserted by the prophet Ygg, a man of unknown age, which was prolonged beyond the human span; this man went as a deserter to Frode, and told him of all the preparations of the Huns.

Meanwhile Hedin, prince of a considerable tribe of the Norwegians, approached the fleet of Frode with a hundred and fifty vessels. Choosing twelve out of these, he proceeded to cruise nearer, signalling the approach of friends by a shield raised on the mast. He thus greatly augmented the forces of the king, and was received into his closest friendship. A mutual love afterwards arose between this man and Hilda, the daughter of Hogni, a chieftain of the Jutes, and a maiden of most eminent renown. For, though they had not yet seen one another, each had been kindled by the other's glory. But when they had a chance of beholding one another, neither could look away; so steadfast was the love that made their eyes linger.

Meanwhile, Frode distributed his soldiers through the towns, and carefully gathered in the materials needed for the winter supplies; but even so he could not maintain his army, with its burden of expense: and plague fell on him almost as great as the destruction that met the Huns. Therefore, to prevent the influx of foreigners, he sent a fleet to the Elbe to take care that nothing should cross; the admirals were Revil and Mevil. When the winter broke up, Hedin and Hogni resolved to make a roving-raid together; for Hogni did not know that his partner was in love with his daughter. Now Hogni was of unusual stature, and stiff in temper; while Hedin was very comely, but short. Also, when Frode saw that the cost of keeping up his army grew daily harder to bear, he sent Roller to Norway, Olmar to Sweden, King Onef and Glomer, a rover captain, to the Orkneys for supplies, each with his own forces. Thirty kings followed Frode, and were his friends or vassals. But when Hun heard that Frode had sent away his forces he mustered another and a fresh army. But Hogni betrothed his daughter to Hedin, after they had sworn to one another that whichever of them should perish by the sword should be avenged by the other.

In the autumn, the men in search of supplies came back, but they were richer in trophies than in food. For Roller had made tributary the provinces Sundmor and Nordmor, after slaying Arthor their king. But Olmar conquered Thor the Long, the King of the Jemts and the Helsings, with two other captains of no less power, and also took Esthonia and Kurland, with Oland, and the isles that fringe Sweden; thus he was a most renowned conqueror of savage lands. So he brought back 700 ships, thus doubling the numbers of those previously taken out. Onef and Glomer, Hedin and Hogni, won victories over the Orkneys, and returned with 900 ships. And by this time revenues had been got in from far and wide, and there were ample materials gathered by plunder to recruit their resources. They had also added twenty kingdoms to the sway of Frode, whose kings, added to the thirty named before, fought on the side of the Danes.

Trusting in their strength, they engaged with the

Huns. Such a carnage broke out on the first day of this combat that the three chief rivers of Russia were bestrewn with a kind of bridge of corpses, and could be crossed and passed over. Also the traces of the massacre spread so wide that for the space of three days' ride the ground was to be seen covered with human carcases. So, when the battle had been seven days prolonged, King Hun fell; and his brother of the same name, when he saw the line of the Huns giving way, without delay surrendered himself and his company. In that war 170 kings, who were either Huns or fighting amongst the Huns, surrendered to the king. This great number Erik had comprised in his previous description of the standards, when he was giving an account of the multitude of the Huns in answer to the questions of Frode. So Frode summoned the kings to assembly, and imposed a rule upon them that they should all live under one and the same law. Now he set Olmar over Holmgard; Onef over Conogard; and he bestowed Saxony on Hun, his prisoner, and gave Revil the Orkneys. To one Dimar he allotted the management of the provinces of the Helsings, of the Jarnbers, and the Jemts, as well as both Laplands; while on Dag he bestowed the government of Esthonia. Each of these men he burdened with fixed conditions of tribute, thus making allegiance a condition of his kindness. So the realms of Frode embraced Russia on the east, and on the west were bounded by the Rhine.

Meantime, certain slanderous tongues accused Hedin to Hogni of having tempted and defiled his daughter before the rites of betrothal; which was then accounted an enormous crime by all nations. So the credulous ears of Hogni drank in this lying report, and with his fleet he attacked Hedin, who was collecting the king's dues among the Slavs; there was an engagement, and Hogni was beaten, and went to Jutland. And thus the peace instituted by Frode was disturbed by intestine war, and natives were the first to disobey the king's law. Frode, therefore, sent men to summon them both at once, and inquired closely what was the reason of their feud. When he had heard it, he gave judgment according to the terms of the law he had enacted; but when he saw that even this could not reconcile them (for the father obstinately demanded his daughter back), he decreed that the quarrel should be settled by the sword—it seemed the only remedy for ending the dispute. The fight began, and Hedin was grievously wounded; but when he began to lose blood and bodily strength, he received unexpected mercy from his enemy. For though Hogni had an easy chance of killing him, yet, pitying youth and beauty, he constrained his cruelty to give way to clemency. And so, loth to cut off a stripling who was panting at his last gasp, he refrained his sword. For of old it was accounted shameful to deprive of his life one who was ungrown or a weakling; so closely did the antique bravery of champions take heed of all that could incline them to modesty. So Hedin, with the help of his men, was taken back to his ship, saved by the kindness of his foe.

In the seventh year after, these same men began to fight on Hedin's isle, and wounded each other so that they died. Hogni would have been lucky if he had shown severity rather than compassion to Hedin when he had once conquered him. They say that Hilda longed so ardently for her husband, that she is believed to have conjured up the spirits of the combatants by her spells in the night in order to renew the war.

At the same time came to pass a savage war between Alrik, king of the Swedes, and Gestiblind, king of the Goths. The latter, being the weaker, approached Frode as a suppliant, willing, if he might get his aid, to surrender his kingdom and himself. He soon received the aid of Skalk, the Skanian, and Erik, and came back with reinforcements. He had determined to let loose his attack on Alrik, but Erik thought that he should first assail his son Gunthion, governor of the men of Wermland and Solongs, declaring that the storm-weary mariner ought to make for the nearest shore, and moreover that the rootless trunk seldom burgeoned. So he made an attack, wherein perished Gunthion, whose tomb records his name. Alrik, when he heard of the destruction of his son, hastened to avenge him, and when he had observed his enemies, he summoned Erik, and, in a secret interview, recounted the leagues of their fathers, imploring him to refuse to fight for Gestiblind. This Erik steadfastly declined, and Alrik then asked leave to fight Gestiblind, thinking that a duel was better than a general engagement. But Erik said that Gestiblind was unfit for arms by reason of old age, pleading his bad health, and above all his years; but offered himself to fight in his place, explaining that it would be shameful to decline a duel on behalf of the man for whom he had come to make a war. Then they fought without delay: Alrik was killed, and Erik was most severely wounded; it was hard to find remedies, and he did not for long time recover health. Now a false report had come to Frode that Erik had fallen, and was tormenting the king's mind with sore grief; but Erik dispelled this sadness with his welcome return; indeed, he reported to Frode that by his efforts Sweden, Wermland, Helsingland, and the islands of the Sun (Soleyar) had been added to his realm. Frode straightway made him king of the nations he had subdued, and also granted to him Helsingland with the two Laplands, Finland and Esthonia, under a yearly tribute. None of the Swedish kings before him was called by the name of Erik, but the title passed from him to the rest.

At the same time Alf was king in Hethmark, and he had a son Asmund. Biorn ruled in the province of Wik, and had a son Aswid. Asmund was engaged on an unsuccessful hunt, and while he was proceeding either to stalk the game with dogs or to catch it in nets, a mist happened to come on. By this he was separated from his snarers on a lonely track, wandered over the dreary ridges, and at last, destitute of horse and clothing, ate fungi and mushrooms, and wandered on aimlessly till he came to the dwelling of King Biorn. Moreover, the son of the king and he, when they had lived together a short while, swore by every vow, in order to ratify the friendship which they observed to one another, that whichever of them lived longest should be buried with him who died. For their fellowship and love were so strong, that each determined he would not prolong his days when the other was cut off by death.

After this Frode gathered together a host of all his subject nations, and attacked Norway with his fleet, Erik being bidden to lead the land force. For, after the fashion of human greed, the more he gained the more he wanted, and would not suffer even the dreariest and most rugged region of the world to escape this kind of attack; so much is increase of wealth wont to encourage covetousness. So the Norwegians, casting away all hope of self-defence, and losing all confidence in their power to revolt, began to flee for the most part to Halogaland. The maiden Stikla also withdrew from her country to save her chastity, proferring the occupations of war to those of wedlock.

Meanwhile Aswid died of an illness, and was consigned with his horse and dog to a cavern in the earth. And Asmund, because of his oath of friendship, had the courage to be buried with him, food being put in for him to eat.

Now just at this time Erik, who had crossed the uplands with his army, happened to draw near the barrow of Aswid; and the Swedes, thinking that treasures were in it, broke the hill open with mattocks, and saw disclosed a cave deeper than they had thought. To examine it, a man was wanted, who would lower himself on a hanging rope tied around him, One of the quickest of the youths was chosen by lot; and Asmund, when he saw him let down in a basket following a rope, straightway cast him out and climbed into the basket. Then he gave the signal to draw him up to those above who were standing by and controlling the rope. They drew in the basket in the hopes of great treasure; but when they saw the unknown figure of the man they had taken out, they were scared by his extraordinary look, and, thinking that the dead had come to life, flung down the rope and fled all ways. For Asmund looked ghastly and seemed to be covered as with the corruption of the charnel. He tried to recall the fugitives, and began to clamour that they were wrongfully afraid of a living man. And when Erik saw him, he marvelled most at the aspect of his bloody face: the blood flowing forth and spurting over it. For Aswid had come to life in the nights, and in his continual struggles had wrenched off his left ear; and there was to be seen the horrid sight of a raw and unhealed scar. And when the bystanders bade him tell how he had got such a wound, he began to speak thus:—

"Why stand ye aghast, who see me colourless? Surely every live man fades among the dead. Evil to the lonely man, and burdensome to the single, remains every dwelling in the world. Hapless are they whom chance hath bereft of human help. The listless night of the cavern, the darkness of the ancient den, have taken all joy from my eyes and soul. The ghastly ground, the crumbling barrow, and the heavy tide of filthy things have marred the grace of my youthful countenance, and sapped my wonted pith and force. Besides all this, I have fought with the dead, enduring the heavy burden and grievous peril of the wrestle; Aswid rose again and fell on me with rending nails, by hellish might renewing ghastly warfare after he was ashes.

"Why stand ye aghast, who see me colourless? Surely every live man fades among the dead.

"By some strange enterprise of the power of hell the spirit of Aswid was sent up from the nether world, and with cruel tooth eats the fleet-footed (horse), and has given his dog to his abominable jaws. Not sated with devouring the horse or hound, he soon turned his swift nails upon me, tearing my cheek and taking off my ear. Hence the hideous sight of my slashed countenance, the blood-spurts in the ugly wound. Yet the bringer of horrors did it not unscathed; for soon I cut off his head with my steel, and impaled his guilty carcase with a stake.

"Why stand ye aghast who see me colourless? Surely every live man fades among the dead."

Frode had by this taken his fleet over to Halogaland; and here, in order to learn the numbers of his host, which seemed to surpass all bounds and measure that could be counted, he ordered his soldiers to pile up a hill, one stone being cast upon the heap for each man. The enemy also pursued the same method of numbering their host, and the hills are still to be seen to convince the visitor. Here Frode joined battle with the Norwegians, and the day was bloody. At nightfall both sides determined to retreat. As daybreak drew near, Erik, who had come across the land, came up and advised the king to renew the battle. In this war the Danes suffered such slaughter that out of 3,000 ships only 170 are supposed to have survived. The Northmen, however, were exterminated in such a mighty massacre, that (so the story goes) there were not men left to till even a fifth of their villages.

Frode, now triumphant, wished to renew peace among all nations, that he might ensure each man's property from the inroads of thieves and now ensure peace to his realms after war. So he hung one bracelet on a crag which is called Frode's Rock, and another in the district of Wik, after he had addressed the assembled Norwegians; threatening that these necklaces should serve to test the honesty which he had decreed, and threatening that if they were filched punishment should fall on all the governors of the district. And thus, sorely imperilling the officers, there was the gold unguarded, hanging up full in the parting of the roads, and the booty, so easy to plunder, a temptation to all covetous spirits. (*a*) Frode also enacted that seafarers should freely use oars wherever they found them; while to those who wished to cross a river he granted free use of the horse which they found nearest to the ford. He decreed that they must dismount from this horse when its fore feet only touched land and its hind feet were still washed by the waters. For he thought that services such as these should rather be accounted kindness than wrongdoing. Moreover, he ordained that whosoever durst try and make further use of the horse after he had crossed the river should be condemned to death. (*b*) He also ordered that no man should hold his house or his coffer under lock and key, or should keep anything guarded by bolts, promising that all losses should be made good threefold. (*c*) Also, he appointed that it was lawful to claim as much of another man's food for provision as would suffice for a single supper. If anyone exceeded this measure in his takings, he was to be held guilty of theft. Now, a thief (so he enacted) was to be hung up with a sword passed through his sinews, with a wolf fastened by his side, so that the wicked man might look like the savage beast, both being punished alike. He also had the same penalty extended to accomplices in thefts. Here he passed seven most happy years of peace, begetting a son Alf and a daughter Eyfura.

It chanced that in these days Arngrim, a champion of Sweden, who had challenged, attacked, and slain Skalk the Skanian because he had once robbed him of a vessel, came to Frode. Elated beyond measure with his deed, he ventured to sue for Frode's daughter; but, finding the king deaf to him, he asked Erik, who was ruling Sweden, to help him. Erik advised him to win Frode's goodwill by some illustrious service, and to fight against Egther, the King of Permland, and Thengil, the King of Finmark, since they alone seemed to repudiate the Danish rule, while all men else submitted. Without delay he led his army to that country. Now, the Finns are the uttermost peoples of the North, who have taken a portion of the world that is barely habitable to till and dwell in. They are very keen spearmen, and no nation has a readier skill in throwing the javelin. They fight with large, broad arrows; they are addicted to the study of spells; they are skilled hunters. Their habitation is not fixed, and their dwellings are migratory; they pitch and settle wherever they have caught game. Riding on curved boards (skees or snow-skates), they run over ridges thick with snow. These men Arngrim attacked, in order to win renown, and he crushed them. They fought with ill success; but, as they were scattering in flight, they cast three pebbles behind them, which they caused to appear to the eyes of the enemy like three mountains. Arngrim's eyes were dazzled and deluded, and he called back his men from the pursuit of the enemy, fancying that he was checked by a barrier of mighty rocks. Again, when they engaged and were beaten on the morrow, the Finns cast snow upon the ground and made it look like a mighty river. So the Swedes, whose eyes were utterly deluded, were deceived by their misjudgment, for it seemed the roaring of an extraordinary mass of waters. Thus, the conqueror dreading the unsubstantial phantom of the waters, the Finns managed to escape. They renewed the war again on the third day; but there was no effective means of escape left any longer, for when they saw that their lines were falling back, they surrendered to the conqueror. Arngrim imposed on them the following terms of tribute: that the number of the Finns should be counted, and that, after the lapse of (every) three years, every ten of them should pay a carriage-full of deer-skins by way of assessment. Then he challenged and slew in single combat Egther, the captain of the men of Permland, imposing on the men of Permland the condition that each of them should pay one skin. Enriched with these spoils and trophies, he returned to Erik, who went with him into Denmark, and poured loud praises of the young warrior into the ear of Frode, declaring that he who had added the ends of the world to his realms deserved his daughter. Then Frode, considering his splendid deserts, thought it was not amiss to take for a son-in-law a man who had won wide-resounding fame by such a roll of noble deeds.

Arngrim had twelve sons by Eyfura, whose names I here subjoin: Brand, Biarbe, Brodd, Hiarrande; Tand, Tyrfing, two Haddings; Hiortuar, Hiartuar, Hrane, Anganty. These followed the business of sea-roving from their youth up; and they chanced to sail all in one ship to the island Samsö, where they found lying off the coast two ships belonging to Hialmar and Arvarodd (Arrow-Odd) the rovers. These ships they attacked and cleared of rowers; but, not knowing whether they had cut down the captains, they fitted the bodies of the slain to their several thwarts, and found that those whom they sought were missing. At this they were sad, knowing that the victory they had won was not worth a straw, and that their safety would run much greater risk in the battle that was to come. In fact, Hialmar and Arvarodd, whose ships had been damaged by a storm, which had torn off their rudders, went into a wood to hew another; and, going round the trunk with their axes, pared down the shapeless timber until the huge stock assumed the form of a marine implement. This they shouldered, and were bearing it down to the beach, ignorant of the disaster of their friends, when the sons of Eyfura, reeking with the fresh blood of the slain, attacked them, so that they two had to fight many; the contest was not even equal, for it was a band of twelve against two. But the victory did not go according to the numbers. For all the sons of Eyfura were killed; Hialmar was slain by them, but Arvarodd gained the honours of victory, being the only survivor left by fate out of all that band of comrades. He, with an incredible effort, poised the still shapeless hulk of the rudder, and drove it so strongly against the bodies of his foes that, with a single thrust of it, he battered and crushed all twelve. And, so, though they were rid of the general storm of war, the band of rovers did not yet quit the ocean.

This it was that chiefly led Frode to attack the West, for his one desire was the spread of peace. So he summoned Erik, and mustered a fleet of all the kingdoms that did him allegiance, and sailed to Britain with numberless ships. But the king of that island, perceiving that he was unequal in force (for the ships seemed to cover the sea), went to Frode, affecting to surrender, and not only began to flatter his greatness, but also promised to the Danes, the conquerors of nations, the submission of himself and of his country; proffering taxes, assessment, tribute, what they would. Finally, he gave them a hospitable invitation. Frode was pleased with the courtesy of the Briton, though his suspicions of treachery were kept by so ready and unconstrained a promise of everything, so speedy a surrender of the enemy before fighting; such offers being seldom made in good faith. They were also troubled with alarm about the banquet, fearing that as drunkenness came on their sober wits might be entangled in it, and attacked by hidden treachery. So few guests were bidden, moreover, that it seemed unsafe for them to accept the invitation; and it was further thought foolish to trust their lives to the good faith of an enemy whom they did not know.

When the king found their minds thus wavering he again approached Frode, and invited him to the banquet with 2,400 men; having before bidden him to come to the feast with 1,200 nobles. Frode was encouraged by the increase in the number of guests, and was able to go to the banquet with greater inward confidence; but he could not yet lay aside his suspicions, and privily caused men to scour the interior and let him know quickly of any treachery which they might espy. On this errand they went into the forest, and, coming upon the array of an armed encampment belonging to the forces of the Britons, they halted in doubt, but hastily retraced their steps when the truth was apparent. For the tents were dusky in colour, and muffled in a sort of pitchy coverings, that they might not catch the eye of anyone who came near. When Frode learned this, he arranged a counter-ambuscade with a strong force of nobles, that he might not go heedlessly to the banquet, and be cheated of timely aid. They went into hiding, and he warned them that the note of the trumpet was the signal for them to bring assistance. Then with a select band, lightly armed, he went to the banquet. The hall was decked with regal splendour; it was covered all round with crimson hangings of marvellous rich handiwork. A curtain of purple dye adorned the panelled walls. The flooring was bestrewn with bright mantles, which a man would fear to trample on. Up above was to be seen the twinkle of many lanterns, the gleam of lamps lit with oil, and the censers poured forth fragrance whose sweet vapour was laden with the choicest perfumes. The whole way was blocked by the tables loaded with good things; and the places for reclining were decked with gold-embroidered couches; the seats were full of pillows. The majestic hall seemed to smile upon the guests, and nothing could be noticed in all that pomp either inharmonious to the eye or offensive to the smell. In the midst of the hall stood a great butt ready for refilling the goblets, and holding an enormous amount of liquor; enough could be drawn from it for the huge revel to drink its fill. Servants, dressed in purple, bore golden cups, and courteously did the office of serving the drink, pacing in ordered ranks. Nor did they fail to offer the draught in the horns of the wild ox.

The feast glittered with golden bowls, and was laden with shining goblets, many of them studded with flashing jewels. The place was filled with an immense luxury; the tables groaned with the dishes, and the bowls brimmed over with divers liquors. Nor did they use wine pure and simple, but, with juices sought far and wide, composed a nectar of many flavours. The dishes glistened with delicious foods, being filled mostly with the spoils of the chase; though the flesh of tame animals was not lacking either. The natives took care to drink more sparingly than the guests; for the latter felt safe, and were tempted to make an orgy; while the others, meditating treachery, had lost all temptations to be drunken. So the Danes, who, if I may say so with my country's leave, were seasoned to drain the bowl against each other, took quantities of wine. The Britons, when they saw that the Danes were very drunk, began gradually to slip away from the banquet, and, leaving their guests within the hall, made immense efforts, first to block the doors of the palace by applying bars and all kinds of obstacles, and then to set fire to the house. The Danes were penned inside the hall, and when the fire began to spread, battered vainly at the doors; but they could not get out, and soon attemped to make a sally by assaulting the wall. And the Angles, when they saw that it was tottering under the stout attack of the Danes, began to shove against it on their side, and to prop the staggering pile by the application of large blocks on the outside, to prevent the wall being shattered and releasing the prisoners. But at last it yielded to the stronger hand of the Danes, whose efforts increased with their peril; and those pent within could sally out with ease. Then Frode bade the trumpet strike in, to summon the band that had been posted in ambush; and these, roused by the note of the clanging bugle, caught the enemy in their own trap; for the King of the Britons, with countless hosts of his men, was utterly destroyed. Thus the band helped Frode doubly, being both the salvation of his men and the destruction of his enemies.

Meantime the renown of the Danish bravery spread far, and moved the Irish to strew iron calthrops on the ground, in order to make their land harder to invade, and forbid access to their shores. Now the Irish use armour which is light and easy to procure. They crop the hair close with razors, and shave all the hair off the back of the head, that they may not be seized by it when they run away. They also turn the points of their spears towards the assailant, and deliberately point their sword against the pursuer; and they generally fling their lances behind their back, being more skilled at conquering by flight than by fighting. Hence, when you fancy that the victory is yours, then is the moment of danger. But Frode was wary and not rash in his pursuit of the foe who fled so treacherously, and he routed Kerwil (Cearbal), the leader of the nation, in battle. Kerwil's brother survived, but lost heart for resistance, and surrendered his country to the king (Frode), who distributed among his soldiers the booty he had won, to show himself free from all covetousness and excessive love of wealth, and only ambitious to gain honour.

After the triumphs in Britain and the spoiling of the Irish they went back to Denmark; and for thirty years there was a pause from all warfare. At this time the Danish name became famous over the whole world almost for its extraordinary valour. Frode, therefore, desired to prolong and establish for ever the lustre of his empire, and made it his first object to inflict severe treatment upon thefts and brigandage, feeling these were domestic evils and intestine plagues, and that if the nations were rid of them they would come to enjoy a more tranquil life; so that no ill-will should mar and hinder the continual extention of peace. He also took care that the land should not be devoured by any plague at home when the enemy was at rest, and that intestine wickedness should not encroach when there was peace abroad. At last he ordered that in Jutland, the chief district of his realm, a golden bracelet, very heavy, should be set up on the highways (as he had done before in the district of

Wik), wishing by this magnificent price to test the honesty which he had enacted. Now, though the minds of the dishonest were vexed with the provocation it furnished, and the souls of the evil tempted, yet the unquestioned dread of danger prevailed. For so potent was the majesty of Frode, that it guarded even gold that was thus exposed to pillage, as though it were fast with bolts and bars. The strange device brought great glory upon its inventor. After dealing destruction everywhere, and gaining famous victories far and wide, he resolved to bestow quiet on all men, that the cheer of peace should follow the horrors of war, and the end of slaughter might be the beginning of safety. He further thought that for the same reason all men's property should be secured to them by a protective decree, so that what had been saved from a foreign enemy might not find a plunderer at home.

About the same time, the Author of our general salvation, coming to the earth in order to save mortals, bore to put on the garb of mortality; at which time the fires of war were quenched, and all the lands were enjoying the calmest and most tranquil peace. It has been thought that the peace then shed abroad so widely, so even and uninterrupted over the whole world, attended not so much an earthly rule as that divine birth; and that it was a heavenly provision that this extraordinary gift of time should be a witness to the presence of Him who created all times.

Meantime a certain matron, skilled in sorcery, who trusted in her art more than she feared the severity of the king, tempted the covetousness of her son to make a secret effort for the prize; promising him impunity, since Frode was almost at death's door, his body failing, and the remnant of his doting spirit feeble. To his mother's counsels he objected the greatness of the peril; but she bade him take hope, declaring, that either a sea-cow should have a calf, or that the king's vengeance should be baulked by some other chance. By this speech she banished her son's fears, and made him obey her advice. When the deed was done, Frode, stung by the affront, rushed with the utmost heat and fury to raze the house of the matron, sending men on to arrest her and bring her with her children. This the woman foreknew, and deluded her enemies by a trick, changing from the shape of a woman into that of a mare. When Frode came up she took the shape of a sea-cow, and seemed to be straying and grazing about the shore; and she also made her sons look like calves of smaller size. This portent amazed the king, and he ordered that they should be surrounded and cut off from returning to the waters. Then he left the carriage, which he used because of the feebleness of his aged body, and sat on the ground marvelling. But the mother, who had taken the shape of the larger beast, charged at the king with outstretched tusk, and pierced one of his sides. The wound killed him; and his end was unworthy of such majesty as his. His soldiers, thirsting to avenge his death, threw their spears and transfixed the monsters, and saw, when they were killed, that they were the corpses of human beings with the heads of wild beasts: a circumstance which exposed the trick more than anything.

So ended Frode, the most famous king in the whole world. The nobles, when he had been disembowelled, had his body kept embalmed for three years, for they feared the provinces would rise if the king's end were published. They wished his death to be concealed above all from foreigners, so that by the pretence that he was alive they might preserve the boundaries of the empire, which had been extended for so long; and that, on the strength of the ancient authority of their general, they might exact the usual tribute from their subjects. So, the lifeless corpse was carried away by them in such a way that it seemed to be taken, not in a funeral bier, but in a royal carriage, as if it were a due and proper tribute from the soldiers to an infirm old man not in full possession of his forces. Such splendour did his friends bestow on him even in death. But when his limbs rotted, and were seized with extreme decay, and when the corruption could not be arrested, they buried his body with a royal funeral in a barrow near Waere, a bridge of Zealand; declaring that Frode had desired to die and be buried in what was thought the chief province of his kingdom.

BOOK SIX.

AFTER the death of Frode, the Danes wrongly supposed that Fridleif, who was being reared in Russia, had perished; and, thinking that the sovereignty halted for lack of an heir, and that it could no longer be kept on in the hands of the royal line, they considered that the sceptre would be best deserved by the man who should affix to the yet fresh grave of Frode a song of praise in his glorification, and commit the renown of the dead king to after ages by a splendid memorial. Then one HIARN, very skilled in writing Danish poetry, wishing to give the fame of the hero some notable record of words, and tempted by the enormous prize, composed, after his own fashion, a barbarous stave. Its purport, expressed in four lines, I have transcribed as follows:

"Frode, whom the Danes would have wished to live long, they bore long through their lands when he was dead. The great chief's body, with this turf heaped above it, bare earth covers under the lucid sky."

When the composer of this song had uttered it, the Danes rewarded him with the crown. Thus they gave a kingdom for an epitaph, and the weight of a whole empire was presented to a little string of letters. Slender expense for so vast a guerdon! This huge payment for a little poem exceeded the glory of Cæsar's recompense;

for it was enough for the divine Julius to pension with a township the writer and glorifier of those conquests which he had achieved over the whole world. But now the spendthrift kindness of the populace squandered a kingdom on a churl. Nay, not even Africanus, when he rewarded the records of his deed, rose to the munificence of the Danes. For there the wage of that laborious volume was in mere gold, while here a few callow verses won a sceptre for a peasant.

At the same time Erik, who held the governorship of Sweden, died of disease; and his son Halfdan, who governed in his father's stead, alarmed by the many attacks of twelve brothers of Norwegian birth, and powerless to punish their violence, fled, hoping for reinforcements, to ask aid of Fridleif, then sojourning in Russia. Approaching him with a suppliant face, he lamented that he was himself shattered and bruised by a foreign foe, and brought a dismal plaint of his wrongs. From him Fridleif heard the tidings of his father's death, and granting the aid he sought, went to Norway in armed array. At this time the aforesaid brothers, their allies forsaking them, built a very high rampart within an island surrounded by a swift stream, also extending their earthworks along the level. Trusting to this refuge, they harried the neighborhood with continual raids. For they built a bridge on which they used to get to the mainland when they left the island. This bridge was fastened to the gate of the stronghold; and they worked it by the guidance of ropes, in such a way that it turned as if on some revolving hinge, and at one time let them pass across the river; while at another, drawn back from above by unseen cords, it helped to defend the entrance.

These warriors were of valiant temper, young and stalwart, of splendid bodily presence, renowned for victories over giants, full of trophies of conquered nations, and wealthy with spoil. I record the names of some of them—for the rest have perished in antiquity—Gerbiorn, Gunbiorn, Arinbiorn, Stenbiorn, Esbiorn, Thorbiorn, and Biorn. Biorn is said to have had a horse which was splendid and of exceeding speed, so that when all the rest were powerless to cross the river it alone stemmed the roaring eddy without weariness. This rapid comes down in so swift and sheer a volume that animals often lose all power of swimming in it, and perish. For, trickling from the topmost crests of the hills, it comes down the steep sides, catches on the rocks, and is shattered, falling into the deep valleys with a manifold clamour of waters; but, being straightway rebuffed by the rocks that bar the way, it keeps the speed of its current ever at the same even pace. And so, along the whole length of the channel, the waves are one turbid mass, and the white foam brims over everywhere. But, after rolling out of the narrows between the rocks, it spreads abroad in a slacker and stiller flood, and turns into an island a rock that lies in its course. On either side of the rock juts out a sheer ridge, thick with divers trees, which screen the river from distant view. Biorn had also a dog of extraordinary fierceness, a terribly vicious brute, dangerous for people to live with, which had often singly destroyed twelve men. But, since the tale is hearsay rather than certainty, let good judges weigh its credit. This dog, as I have heard, was the favourite of the giant Offot (Un-foot), and used to watch his herd amid the pastures.

Now the warriors, who were always pillaging the neighbourhood, used often to commit great slaughters. Plundering houses, cutting down cattle, sacking everything, making great hauls of booty, rifling houses, then burning them, massacring male and female promiscuously—these, and not honest dealings, were their occupations. Fridleif surprised them while on a reckless raid, and drove them all back for refuge to the stronghold; he also seized the immensely powerful horse, whose rider, in the haste of his panic, had left it on the hither side of the river in order to fly betimes; for he durst not take it with him over the bridge. Then Fridleif proclaimed that he would pay the weight of the dead body in gold to any man who slew one of those brothers. The hope of the prize stimulated some of the champions of the king; and yet they were fired not so much with covetousness as with valour; so, going secretly to Fridleif, they promised to attempt the task, vowing to sacrifice their lives if they did not bring home the severed heads of the robbers. Fridleif praised their valour and their vows, but bidding the onlookers wait, went in the night to the river, satisfied with a single companion. For, not to seem better provided with other men's valour than with his own, he determined to forestall their aid by his own courage. Thereupon he crushed and killed his companion with a shower of flints, and flung his bloodless corpse into the waves, having dressed it in his own clothes; which he stripped off, borrowing the cast-off garb of the other, so that when the corpse was seen it might look as if the king had perished. He further deliberately drew blood from the beast on which he had ridden, and bespattered it, so that when it came back into camp he might make them think he himself was dead. Then he set spur to his horse and drove it into the midst of the eddies, crossed the river and alighted, and tried to climb over the rampart that screened the stronghold by steps set up against the mound. When he got over the top and could grasp the battlements with his hand, he quietly put his foot inside, and, without the knowledge of the watch, went lightly on tiptoe to the house into which the bandits had gone to carouse. And when he had reached its hall, he sat down under the porch overhanging the door. Now the strength of their fastness made the warriors feel so safe that they were tempted to a debauch; for they thought that the swiftly rushing river made their garrison inaccessible, since it seemed impossible either to swim over or to cross in boats. For no part of the river allowed of fording.

Biorn, moved by the revel, said that in his sleep he had seen a beast come out of the waters, which spouted ghastly fire from its mouth, enveloping everything in a sheet of flame. Therefore the holes and corners of the island should, he said, be searched; nor ought they to trust so much to their position, as rashly to let overweening confidence bring them to utter ruin. No situation was so strong that the mere protection of nature was enough for it without human effort. Moreover they must take great care that the warning of his slumbers was not followed by a yet more gloomy and disastrous fulfilment. So they all sallied forth from the stronghold, and narrowly scanned the whole circuit of the island; and finding the horse they surmised that Fridleif had been drowned in the waters of the river. They received the horse within the gates with rejoicing, supposing that it had flung off its rider and swum over. But Biorn, still scared with the memory of the visions of the night, advised them to keep watch, since it was not safe for them yet to put aside suspicion of danger. Then he went to his room to rest, with the memory of his vision deeply stored in his heart.

Meanwhile the horse, which Fridleif, in order to spread a belief in his death, had been loosed and besprinkled with blood (though only with that which lies between flesh and skin), burst all bedabbled into the camp of his soldiers. They went straight to the river, and finding the carcase of the slave, took it for the body of the king; the hissing eddies having cast it on the bank, dressed in brave attire. Nothing helped their mistake so much as the swelling of the battered body; inasmuch as the skin was torn and bruised with the flints, so that all the features were blotted out, bloodless and wan. This exasperated the champions who had just promised Fridleif to see that the robbers were extirpated: and they approached the perilous torrent, that they might not seem to tarnish the honour of their promise by a craven neglect of their vow. The rest imitated their boldness, and with equal ardour went to the river, ready to avenge their king or to endure the worst. When Fridleif saw them he hastened to lower the bridge to the mainland; and when he had got the champions he cut down the watch at the first attack. Thus he went on to attack the rest and put them to the sword, all save Biorn; whom he tended very carefully and cured of his wounds; whereupon, under pledge of solemn oath, he made him his colleague, thinking it better to use his services than to boast of his death. He also declared it would be shameful if such a flower of bravery were plucked in his first youth and perished by an untimely death.

Now the Danes had long ago had false tidings of Fridleif's death, and when they found that he was approaching, they sent men to fetch him, and ordered Hiarn to quit the sovereignty, because he was thought to be holding it only on sufferance and carelessly. But he could not bring himself to resign such an honour, and chose sooner to spend his life for glory than pass into the dim lot of common men. Therefore he resolved to fight for his present estate, that he might not have to resume his former one stripped of his royal honours. Thus the land was estranged and vexed with the hasty commotion of civil strife; some were of Hiarn's party, while others agreed to the claims of Fridleif, because of the vast services of Frode; and the voice of the commons was perplexed and divided, some of them respecting things as they were, others the memory of the past. But regard for the memory of Frode weighed most, and its sweetness gave Fridleif the balance of popularity.

Many wise men thought that a person of peasant rank should be removed from the sovereignty; since, contrary to the rights of birth, and only by the favour of fortune, he had reached an unhoped-for eminence; and in order that the unlawful occupant might not debar the rightful heir to the office, Fridleif told the envoys of the Danes to return, and request Hiarn either to resign the kingdom or to meet him in battle. Hiarn thought it more grievous than death to set lust of life before honour, and to seek safety at the cost of glory. So he met Fridleif in the field, was crushed, and fled into Jutland, where, rallying a band, he again attacked his conqueror. But his men were all consumed with the sword, and he fled unattended, as the island testifies which has taken its name from his (Hiarno). And so, feeling his lowly fortune, and seeing himself almost stripped of his forces by the double defeat, he turned his mind to craft, and went to Fridleif with his face disguised, meaning to become intimate, and find an occasion to slay him treacherously.

Hiarn was received by the king, hiding his purpose under the pretence of servitude. For, giving himself out as a salt-distiller, he performed base offices among the servants who did the filthiest work. He used also to take the last place at meal-time, and he refrained from the baths, lest his multitude of scars should betray him if he stripped. The king, in order to ease his own suspicions, made him wash; and when he knew his enemy by the scars, he said: "Tell me now, thou shameless bandit, how wouldst thou have dealt with me, if thou hadst found out plainly that I wished to murder thee?" Hiarn, stupefied, said: "Had I caught thee I would have first challenged thee, and then fought thee, to give thee a better chance of wiping out thy reproach." Fridleif presently took him at his word, challenged him and slew him, and buried his body in a barrow that bears the dead man's name.

Soon after FRIDLEIF was admonished by his people to think about marrying, that he might prolong his line; but he maintained that the unmarried life was best, quoting his father Frode, on whom his wife's wantonness had brought great dishonour. At last, yielding to the persistent entreaties of all, he proceeded to send ambassadors to ask for the daughter of Amund, King of Norway. One of these, named Frok, was swallowed by the waves in mid-voyage, and shewed a strange portent at his death. For when the closing flood of billows encompassed him, blood arose in the midst of the eddy, and the whole face of the sea was steeped with an alien redness, so that the ocean, which a moment before was foaming and white with tempest, was presently swollen with crimson waves, and was seen to wear a colour foreign to its nature.

Amund implacably declined to consent to the wishes of the king, and treated the legates shamefully, declaring that he spurned the embassy because the tyranny of Frode had of old borne so heavily upon Norway. But Amund's daughter, Frogertha, not only looking to the birth of Fridleif, but also honouring the glory of his deeds, began to upbraid her father, because he scorned a son-in-law whose nobility was perfect, being both sufficient in valour and flawless in birth. She added that the portentous aspect of the sea, when the waves were suddenly turned into blood, simply and solely signified the defeat of Norway, and was a plain presage of the victory of Denmark. And when Fridleif sent a further embassy to ask for her, wishing to vanquish the refusal by persistency, Amund was indignant that a petition he had once denied should be obstinately pressed, and hurried the envoys to death, wishing to offer a brutal check to the zeal of this brazen wooer. Fridleif heard news of this outrage, and summoning Halfdan and Biorn, sailed round Norway. Amund, equipped with his native defences, put out his fleet against him. The firth into which both fleets had mustered is called Frokasund. Here Fridleif left the camp at night to reconnoitre; and, hearing an unusual kind of sound close to him as of brass being beaten, he stood still and looked up, and heard the following song of three swans, who were crying above him:

"While Hythin sweeps the sea and cleaves the ravening tide, his serf drinks out of gold and licks the cups of milk. Best is the estate of the slave on whom waits the heir, the king's son, for their lots are rashly interchanged." Next, after the birds had sung, a belt fell from on high, which showed writing to interpret the song. For while the son of Hythin, the King of Tellemark, was at his boyish play, a giant, assuming the usual appearance of men, had carried him off, and using him as an oarsman (having taken his skiff over to the neighbouring shore), was then sailing past Fridleif while he was occupied reconnoitering. But the king would not suffer him to use the service of the captive youth, and longed to rob the spoiler of his prey. The youth warned him that he must first use sharp reviling against the giant, promising that he would prove easy to attack, if only he were assailed with biting verse. Then Fridleif began thus:

"Since thou art a giant of three bodies, invincible, and almost reachest heaven with thy crest, why does this silly sword bind thy thigh? Why doth a broken spear gird thy huge side? Why, perchance, dost thou defend thy stalwart breast with a feeble sword, and forget the likeness of thy bodily stature, trusting in a short dagger, a petty weapon? Soon, soon will I balk thy bold onset, when with blunted blade thou attemptest war. Since thou art thyself a timid beast, a lump lacking proper pith, thou art swept headlong like a flying shadow, having with a fair and famous body got a heart that is unwarlike and unstable with fear, and a spirit quite unmatched to thy limbs. Hence thy frame totters, for thy goodly presence is faulty through the overthrow of thy soul, and thy nature in all her parts is at strife. Hence shall all tribute of praise quit thee, nor shalt thou be accounted famous among the brave, but shalt be reckoned among ranks obscure."

When he had said this he lopped off a hand and foot of the giant, made him fly, and set his prisoner free. Then he went straightway to the giant's headland, took the treasure out of his cave, and carried it away. Rejoicing in these trophies, and employing the kidnapped youth to row him over the sea, he composed with cheery voice the following strain:

"In the slaying of the swift monster we wielded our blood-stained swords and our crimsoned blade, whilst thou, Amund, lord of the Norwegian ruin, wert in deep slumber; and since blind night covers thee, without any light of soul, thy valour has melted away and beguiled thee. But we crushed a giant who lost use of his limbs and wealth, and we pierced into the disorder of his dreary den. There we seized and plundered his piles of gold. And now with oars we sweep the wave-wandering main, and joyously return, rowing back to the shore our booty-laden ship; we fleet over the waves in a skiff that travels the sea; gaily let us furrow those open waters, lest the dawn come and betray us to the foe. Lightly therefore, and pulling our hardest, let us scour the sea, making for our camp and fleet ere Titan raise his rosy head out of the clear waters; that when fame noises the deed about, and Frogertha knows that the spoil has been won with a gallant struggle, her heart may be stirred to be more gentle to our prayer."

On the morrow there was a great muster of the forces, and Fridleif had a bloody battle with Amund, fought partly by sea and partly by land. For not only were the lines drawn up in the open country, but the warriors also made an attack with their fleet. The battle which followed cost much blood. So Biorn, when his ranks gave back, unloosed his hound and sent it against the enemy; wishing to win with the biting of a dog the victory which he could not achieve with the sword. The enemy were by this means shamefully routed, for a square of the warriors ran away when attacked with its teeth.

There is no saying whether their flight was more dismal or more disgraceful. Indeed, the army of the Northmen was a thing to blush for; for an enemy crushed it by borrowing the aid of a brute. Nor was it treacherous of Fridleif to recruit the failing valour of his men with the aid of a dog. In this war Amund fell; and his servant Ane, surnamed the Archer, challenged Fridleif to fight him; but Biorn, being a man of meaner estate, not suffering the king to engage with a common fellow, attacked him himself. And when Biorn had bent his bow and was fitting the arrow to the string, suddenly a dart sent by Ane pierced the top of the cord. Soon another arrow came after it and struck amid the joints of his fingers. A third followed, and fell on the arrow as it was laid to the string. For Ane, who was most dexterous at shooting arrows from a distance, had purposely only struck the weapon of his opponent, in order that, by showing it was in his power to do likewise to his person, he might recall the champion from his purpose. But Biorn abated none of his valour for this, and, scorning bodily danger, entered the fray with heart and face so steadfast, that he seemed neither to yield anything to the skill of Ane, nor lay aside aught of his wonted courage. Thus he would in nowise be made to swerve from his purpose, and dauntlessly ventured on the battle. Both of them left it wounded; and fought another also on Agdar Ness with an emulous thirst for glory.

By the death of Amund, Fridleif was freed from a most bitter foe, and obtained a deep and tranquil peace; whereupon he forced his savage temper to the service of delight; and, transferring his ardour to love, equipped a fleet in order to seek the marriage which had once been denied him. At last he set forth on his voyage; and his fleet being becalmed, he invaded some villages to look for food; where, being received hospitably by a certain Grubb, and at last winning his daughter in marriage, he begat a son named Olaf. After some time had passed he also won Frogertha; but, while going back to his own country, he had a bad voyage, and was driven on the shores of an unknown island. A certain man appeared to him in a vision, and instructed him to dig up a treasure that was buried in the ground, and also to attack the dragon that guarded it, covering himself in an ox-hide to escape the poison; teaching him also to meet the envenomed fangs with a hide stretched over his shield. Therefore, to test the vision, he attacked the snake as it rose out of the waves, and for a long time cast spears against its scaly side; in vain, for its hard and shelly body foiled the darts flung at it. But the snake, shaking its mass of coils, uprooted the trees which it brushed past by winding its tail about them. Moreover, by constantly dragging its body, it hollowed the ground down to the solid rock, and had made a sheer bank on either hand, just as in some places we see hills parted by an intervening valley. So Fridleif, seeing that the upper part of the creature was proof against attack, assailed the lower side with his sword, and piercing the groin, drew blood from the quivering beast. When it was dead, he unearthed the money from the underground chamber and had it taken off in his ships.

When the year had come to an end, he took great pains to reconcile Biorn and Ane, who had often challenged and fought one another, and made them exchange their hatred for friendship; and even entrusted to them his three-year-old son, Olaf, to rear. But his mistress, Juritha, the mother of Olaf, he gave in marriage to Ane, whom he made one of his warriors; thinking that she would endure more calmly to be put away, if she wedded such a champion, and received his robust embrace instead of a king's.

The ancients were wont to consult the oracles of the Fates concerning the destinies of their children. In this way Fridleif desired to search into the fate of his son Olaf; and, after solemnly offering up his vows, he went to the house of the gods in entreaty; where, looking into the chapel, he saw three maidens, sitting on three seats. The first of them was of a benignant temper, and bestowed upon the boy abundant beauty and ample store of favour in the eyes of men. The second granted him the gift of surpassing generosity. But the third, a woman of more mischievous temper and malignant disposition, scorning the unanimous kindness of her sisters, and likewise wishing to mar their gifts, marked the future character of the boy with the slur of niggardliness. Thus the benefits of the others were spoilt by the poison of a lamentable doom; and hence, by virture of the twofold nature of these gifts Olaf got his surname from the meanness which was mingled with his bounty. So it came about that this blemish which found its way into the gift marred the whole sweetness of its first benignity.

When Fridleif had returned from Norway, and was traveling through Sweden, he took on himself to act as ambassador, and sued successfully for Hythin's daughter, whom he had once rescued from a monster, to be the wife of Halfdan, he being still unwedded. Meantime his wife Frogertha bore a son FRODE, who afterwards got his surname from his noble munificence. And thus Frode, because of the memory of his grandsire's prosperity, which he recalled by his name, became from his very cradle and earliest childhood such a darling of all men, that he was not suffered even to step or stand on the ground, but was continually cherished in people's laps and kissed. Thus he was not assigned to one upbringer only, but was in a manner everybody's fosterling. And, after his father's death, while he was in his twelfth year, Swerting and Hanef, the kings of Saxony, disowned his sway, and tried to rebel openly. He overcame them in battle, and imposed on the conquered peoples a poll-tax of a coin, which they were to pay as his slaves. For he showed himself so generous that he doubled the ancient pay of the soldiers: a fashion of bounty which then was novel. For he did not, as despots do, expose himself to the vulgar allurements of vice, but strove to covet ardently whatsoever he saw was nearest honour; to make his wealth public property; to surpass all other men in bounty, to forestall them all in offices of kindness; and, hardest of all, to conquer envy by virtue. By this means the youth soon won such favour with all men, that he not only equalled in renown the honours of his forefathers, but surpassed the most ancient records of kings.

At the same time one Starkad, the son of Storwerk, escaped alone, either by force or fortune, from a wreck in which his friends perished, and was received by Frode as his guest for his incredible excellence both of mind and body. And, after being for some little time his comrade, he was dressed in a better and more comely fashion every day, and was at last given a noble vessel, and bidden to ply the calling of a rover, with the charge of guarding the sea. For nature had gifted him with a body of superhuman excellence; and his greatness of spirit equalled it, so that folk thought him behind no man in valour. So far did his glory spread, that the renown of his name and deeds continues famous even yet. He shone out among our own countrymen by his glorious roll of exploits, and he had also won a most splendid record among all the provinces of the Swedes and Saxons. Tradition says that he was born originally in the country which borders Sweden on the east, where barbarous hordes of Esthonians and other nations now dwell far and wide. But a fabulous yet common rumour has invented tales about his birth which are contrary to reason and flatly incredible. For some relate that he was sprung from giants, and betrayed his monstrous birth by an extraordinary number of hands, four of which, engendered by the superfluity of his nature, they declare that the god Thor tore off, shattering the framework of the sinews and wrenching from his whole body the monstrous bunches of fingers; so that he had but two left, and that his body, which had before swollen to the size of a giant's, and, by reason of its shapeless crowd of limbs looked gigantic, was thenceforth chastened to a better appearance, and kept within the bounds of human shortness.

For there were of old certain men versed in sorcery, Thor, namely, and Odin, and many others, who were cunning in contriving marvellous sleights; and they, winning the minds of the simple, began to claim the rank of gods. For, in particular, they ensnared Norway, Sweden and Denmark in the vainest credulity, and by prompting these lands to worship them, infected them with their imposture. The effects of their deceit spread so far, that all other men adored a sort of divine power in them, and, thinking them either gods or in league with gods, offered up solemn prayers to these inventors of sorceries, and gave to blasphemous error the honour due to religion. Hence it has come about that the holy days, in their regular course, are called among us by the names of these men; for the ancient Latins are known to have named these days severally, either after the titles of their own gods, or after the planets, seven in number. But it can be plainly inferred from the mere names of the holy days that the objects worshipped by our countrymen were not the same as those whom the most ancient of the Romans called Jove and Mercury, nor those to whom Greece and Latium paid idolatrous homage. For the days, called among our countrymen Thors-day or Odins-day, the ancients termed severally the holy day of Jove or of Mercury. If, therefore, according to the distinction implied in the interpretation I have quoted, we take it that Thor is Jove and Odin Mercury, it follows that Jove was the son of Mercury; that is, if the assertion of our countrymen holds, among whom it is told as a matter of common belief, that Thor was Odin's son. Therefore, when the

Latins, believing to the contrary effect, declare that Mercury was sprung from Jove, then, if their declaration is to stand, we are driven to consider that Thor was not the same as Jove, and that Odin was also different from Mercury. Some say that the gods, whom our countrymen worshipped, shared only the title with those honoured by Greece or Latium, but that, being in a manner nearly equal to them in dignity, they borrowed from them the worship as well as the name. This must be sufficient discourse upon the deities of Danish antiquity. I have expounded this briefly for the general profit, that my readers may know clearly to what worship in its heathen superstition our country has bowed the knee. Now I will go back to my subject where I left it.

Ancient tradition says that Starkad, whom I mentioned above, offered the first-fruits of his deeds to the favour of the gods by slaying Wikar, the king of the Norwegians. The affair, according to the version of some people, happened as follows:—

Odin once wished to slay Wikar by a grievous death; but, loth to do the deed openly, he graced Starkad, who was already remarkable for his extraordinary size, not only with bravery, but also with skill in the composing of spells, that he might the more readily use his services to accomplish the destruction of the king. For that was how he hoped that Starkad would show himself grateful for the honour he paid him. For the same reason he also endowed him with three spans of mortal life, that he might be able to commit in them as many abominable deeds. So Odin resolved that Starkad's days should be prolonged by the following crime: Starkad presently went to Wikar and dwelt awhile in his company, hiding treachery under homage. At last he went with him sea-roving. And in a certain place they were troubled with prolonged and bitter storms; and when the winds checked their voyage so much that they had to lie still most of the year, they thought that the gods must be appeased with human blood. When the lots were cast into the urn it so fell that the king was required for death as a victim. Then Starkad made a noose of withies and bound the king in it; saying that for a brief instant he should pay the mere semblance of a penalty. But the tightness of the knot acted according to its nature, and cut off his last breath as he hung. And while he was still quivering Starkad rent away with his steel the remnant of his life; thus disclosing his treachery when he ought to have brought aid. I do not think that I need examine the version which relates that the pliant withies, hardened with the sudden grip, acted like a noose of iron.

When Starkad had thus treacherously acted he took Wikar's ship and went to one Bemon, the most courageous of all the rovers of Denmark, in order to take up the life of a pirate. For Bemon's partner, named Frakk, weary of the toil of sea-roving, had lately withdrawn from partnership with him, after first making a money-bargain. Now Starkad and Bemon were so careful to keep temperate, that they are said never to have indulged in intoxicating drink, for fear that continence, the greatest bond of bravery, might be expelled by the power of wantonness. So when, after overthrowing provinces far and wide, they invaded Russia also in their lust for empire, the natives, trusting little in their walls or arms, began to bar the advance of the enemy with nails of uncommon sharpness, that they might check their inroad, though they could not curb their onset in battle; and that the ground might secretly wound the soles of the men whom their army shrank from confronting in the field. But not even such a barrier could serve to keep off the foe. The Danes were cunning enough to foil the pains of the Russians. For they straightway shod themselves with wooden clogs, and trod with unhurt steps upon the points that lay beneath their soles. Now this iron thing is divided into four spikes, which are so arranged that on whatsoever side chance may cast it, it stands steadily on three equal feet. Then they struck into the pathless glades, where the woods were thickets, and expelled Flokk, the chief of the Russians, from the mountain hiding-places into which he had crept. And here they got so much booty, that there was not one of them but went back to the fleet laden with gold and silver.

Now when Bemon was dead, Starkad was summoned because of his valour by the champions of Permland. And when he had done many noteworthy deeds among them, he went into the land of the Swedes, where he lived at leisure for seven years' space with the sons of Frey. At last he left them and betook himself to Hakon, the tyrant of Denmark, because when stationed at Upsala, at the time of the sacrifices, he was disgusted by the effeminate gestures and the clapping of the mimes on the stage, and by the unmanly clatter of the bells. Hence it is clear how far he kept his soul from lasciviousness, not even enduring to look upon it. Thus does virtue withstand wantonness.

Starkad took his fleet to the shore of Ireland with Hakon, in order that even the furthest kingdoms of the world might not be untouched by the Danish arms. The king of the island at this time was Hugleik, who, though he had a well-filled treasury, was yet so prone to avarice, that once, when he gave a pair of shoes which had been adorned by the hand of a careful craftsman, he took off the ties, and by thus removing the latches turned his present into a slight. This unhandsome act blemished his gift so much that he seemed to reap hatred for it instead of thanks. Thus he used never to be generous to any respectable man, but to spend all his bounty upon mimes and jugglers. For so base a fellow was bound to keep friendly company with the base, and such a slough of vices to wheedle his partners in sin with pandering endearments.

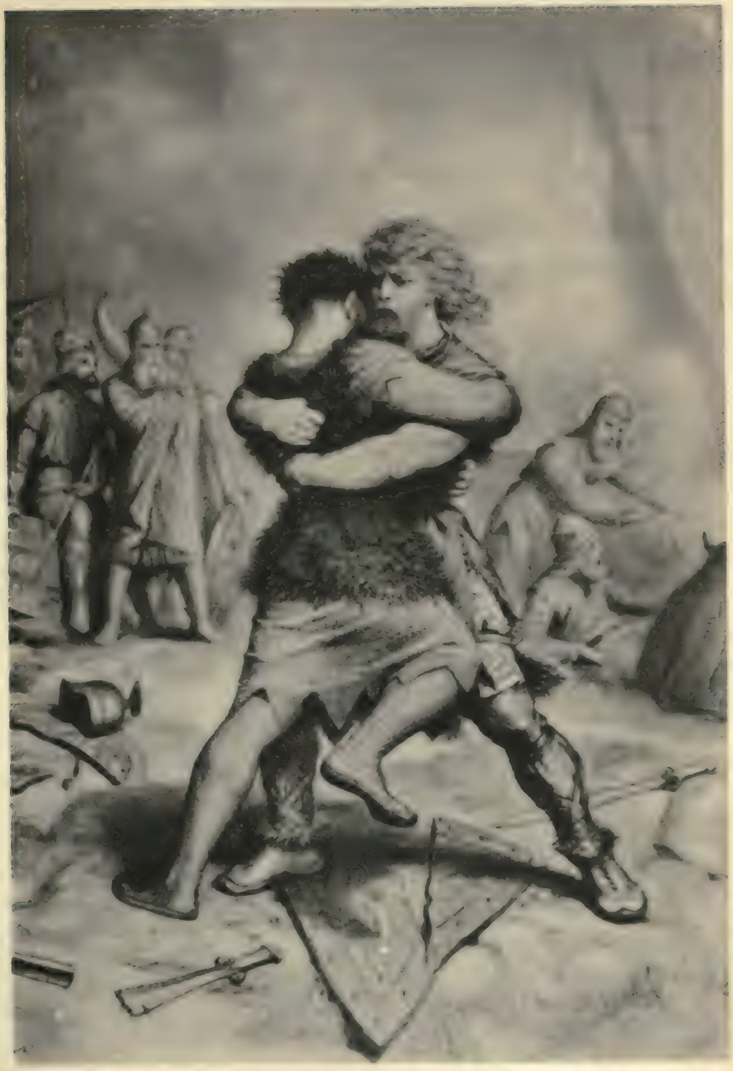
Still Hugleik had the friendship of Geigad and Swipdag, nobles of tried valour, who, by the lustre of their warlike deeds, shone out among their unmanly companions like jewels embedded in ordure; these alone were found to defend the riches of the king. When a battle began between Hugleik and Hakon, the hordes of mimes, whose light-mindedness unsteadied their bodies, broke their ranks and scurried off in panic; and this shameful flight was their sole requital for all their king's benefits. Then Geigad and Swipdag faced all those thousands of the enemy single-handed, and fought with such incredible courage, that they seemed to do the part not merely of two warriors, but of a whole army. Geigad, moreover, dealt Hakon, who pressed him hard, such a wound in the breast that he exposed the upper part of his liver. It was here that Starkad, while he was attacking Geigad with his sword, received a very sore wound on the head; wherefore he afterwards related in a certain song that a ghastlier wound had never befallen him at any time; for, though the divisions of his gashed head were bound up by the surrounding outer skin, yet the livid unseen wound concealed a foul gangrene below.

Starkad conquered, killed Hugleik and routed the Irish; and had the actors beaten whom chance made prisoner; thinking it better to order a pack of buffoons to be ludicrously punished by the loss of their skins than to command a more deadly punishment and take their lives. Thus he visited with a disgraceful chastisement the base-born throng of professional jugglers, and was content to punish them with the disgusting flouts of the lash. Then the Danes ordered that the wealth of the king should be brought out of the treasury in the city of Dublin and publicly pillaged. For so vast a treasure had been found that none took much pains to divide it strictly.

After this, Starkad was commissioned, together with Win, the chief of the Sclavs, to check the revolt of the East. They, having fought against the armies of the Kurlanders, the Sembs, the Sangals, and, finally, all the Easterlings, won splendid victories everywhere.

A champion of great repute, named Wisin, settled upon a rock in Russia named Ana-fial, and harried both neighbouring and distant provinces with all kinds of outrage. This man used to blunt the edge of every weapon by merely looking at it. He was made so bold in consequence, by having lost all fear of wounds, that he used to carry off the wives of distinguished men and drag them to outrage before the eyes of their husbands. Starkad was roused by the tale of this villainy, and went to Russia to destroy the criminal; thinking nothing too hard to overcome, he challenged Wisin, attacked him, made even his tricks useless to him, and slew him. For Starkad covered his blade with a very fine skin, that it might not met the eye of the sorcerer; and neither the power of his sleights nor his great strength were any help to Wisin, for he had to yield to Starkad. Then Starkad, trusting in his bodily strength, fought with and overcame a giant at Byzantium, reputed invincible, named Tanne, and drove him to fly an outlaw to unknown quarters of the earth. Therefore, finding that he was too mighty for any hard fate to overcome him, he went to the country of Poland, and conquered in a duel a champion whom our countrymen name Wasce; but the Teutons, arranging the letters differently, call him Wilzce.

Meanwhile the Saxons began to attempt a revolt, and to consider particularly how they could destroy Frode, who was unconquered in war, by some other way than an open conflict. Thinking that it would be best done by a duel, they sent men to provoke the king with a challenge, knowing that he was always ready to court any hazard, and that his high spirit would not yield to any admonition whatever. They fancied that this was the best time



DUEL BETWEEN HAME AND STARKAD.

(From the Painting by Knut Ekwall.)

IT WAS not an unusual thing among Scandinavian people to settle disputes by feats of strength and by duels with swords. Not infrequently two opposing armies, rather than submit to the hazard of a general battle chose champions from their ranks who fought until one was killed, victory being accorded the army from which the successful combatant volunteered. A historic duel of this kind took place between Hame, a Saxon hero, and Starkad, a redoubtable Danish Warrior, the latter again proving his invincible prowess

to attack him, because they knew that Starkad, whose valour most men dreaded, was away on business. But while Frode hesitated, and said that he would talk with his friends about the answer to be given, Starkad, who had just returned from his sea-roving, appeared, and blamed such a challenge, principally (he said) because it was fitting for kings to fight only with their equals, and because they should not take up arms against men of the people; but it was more fitting for himself, who was born in a lowlier station, to manage the battle.

The Saxons approached Hame, who was accounted their most famous champion, with many offers, and promised him that, if he would lend his services for the duel they would pay him his own weight in gold. The fighter was tempted by the money, and, with all the ovation of a military procession, they attended him to the ground appointed for the combat. Thereupon the Danes, decked in warlike array, led Starkad, who was to represent his king, out to the duelling-ground. Hame, in his youthful assurance, despised him as withered with age, and chose to grapple rather than fight with an outworn old man. Attacking Starkad, he would have flung him tottering to the earth, but that fortune, who would not suffer the old man to be conquered, prevented him from being hurt. For he is said to have been so crushed by the fist of Hame, as he dashed on him, that he touched the earth with his chin, supporting himself on his knees. But he made up nobly for his tottering; for, as soon as he could raise his knee and free his hand to draw his sword, he clove Hame through the middle of the body. Many lands and sixty bondmen apiece were the reward of the victory.

After Hame was killed in this manner the sway of the Danes over the Saxons grew so insolent, that they were forced to pay every year a small tax for each of their limbs that was a cubit (ell) long, in token of their slavery. This Hanef could not bear, and he meditated war in his desire to remove the tribute. Steadfast love of his country filled his heart every day with greater compassion for the oppressed; and,longing to spend his life for the freedom of his countrymen, he openly showed a disposition to rebel. Frode took his forces over the Elbe, and killed him near the village of Hanofra (Hanover), so named after Hanef. But Swerting, though he was equally moved by the distress of his countrymen, said nothing about the ills of his land, and revolved a plan for freedom with a spirit yet more dogged than Hanef's. Men often doubt whether this zeal was liker to vice or to virtue; but I certainly censure it as criminal, because it was produced by a treacherous desire to revolt. It may have seemed most expedient to seek the freedom of the country, but it was not lawful to strive after this freedom by craft and treachery. Therefore, since the deed of Swerting was far from honourable, neither will it be called expedient; for it is nobler to attack openly him whom you mean to attack, and to exhibit hatred in the light of day, than to disguise a real wish to do harm under a spurious show of friendship. But the gains of crime are inglorious, its fruits are brief and fading. For even as that soul is slippery, which hides its insolent treachery by stealthy arts, so is it right that whatsoever is akin to guilt should be frail and fleeting. For guilt has been usually found to come home to its author; and rumour relates that such was the fate of Swerting. For he had resolved to surprise the king under the pretence of a banquet, and burn him to death; but the king forestalled and slew him, though slain by him in return. Hence the crime of one proved the destruction of both; and thus, though the trick succeeded against the foe, it did not bestow immunity on its author.

Frode was succeeded by his son Ingild, whose soul was perverted from honour. He forsook the examples of his forefathers, and utterly enthralled himself to the lures of the most wanton profligacy. Thus he had not a shadow of goodness and righteousness, but embraced vices instead of virtue; he cut the sinews of self-control, neglected the duties of his kingly station, and sank into a filthy slave of riot. Indeed, he fostered everything that was adverse or ill-fitted to an orderly life. He tainted the glories of his father and grandfather by practising the foulest lusts, and bedimmed the brightest honours of his ancestors by most shameful deeds. For he was so prone to gluttony, that he had no desire to avenge his father, or repel the aggressions of his foes; and so, could he but gratify his gullet, he thought that decency and self-control need be observed in nothing. By idleness and sloth he stained his glorious lineage, living a loose and sensual life; and his soul, so degenerate, so far perverted and astray from the steps of his fathers, he loved to plunge into most abominable gulfs of foulness. Fowl-fatteners, scullions, frying-pans, countless cook-houses, different cooks to roast or spice the banquet—the choosing of these stood to him for glory. As to arms, soldiering, and wars, he could endure neither to train himself to them, nor to let others practise them. Thus he cast away all the ambitions of a man and aspired to those of women; for his incontinent itching of palate stirred in him love of every kitchen-stench. Ever breathing of his debauch, and stripped of every rag of soberness, with his foul breath he belched the undigested filth in his belly. He was as infamous in wantonness as Frode was illustrious in war. So utterly had his spirit been enfeebled by the untimely seductions of gluttony. Starkad was so disgusted at the excess of Ingild, that he forsook his friendship, and sought the fellowship of Halfdan, the King of Swedes, preferring work to idleness. Thus he could not bear so much as to countenance excessive indulgence. Now the sons of Swerting, fearing that they would have to pay to Ingild the penalty of their father's crime, were fain to forestall his vengeance by a gift, and gave him their sister in marriage. Antiquity[1] relates that she bore him sons, Frode, Fridleif, Ingild, and Olaf (whom some say was the son of Ingild's sister).

Ingild's sister Helga had been led by amorous wooing to return the flame of a certain low-born goldsmith, who was apt for soft words, and furnished with divers of the little gifts which best charm a woman's wishes. For since the death of the king there had been none to honour the virtues of the father by attention to the child; she had lacked protection, and had no guardians. When Starkad had learnt this from the repeated tales of travellers, he could not bear to let the wantonness of the smith pass unpunished. For he was always heedful to bear kindness in mind, and as ready to punish arrogance. So he hastened to chastise such bold and enormous insolence, wishing to repay the orphan ward the benefits he had of old received from Frode. Then he travelled through Sweden, went into the house of the smith, and posted himself near the threshold muffling his face in a cap to avoid discovery. The smith, who had not learnt the lesson that "strong hands are sometimes found under a mean garment," reviled him, and bade him quickly leave the house, saying that he should have the last broken victuals among the crowd of paupers. But the old man, whose ingrained self-control lent him patience, was nevertheless fain to rest there, and gradually study the wantonness of his host. For his reason was stronger than his impetuosity, and curbed his increasing rage. Then the smith approached the girl with open shamelessness, and cast himself in her lap, offering the hair of his head to be combed out by her maidenly hands.

Also he thrust forward his loin cloth, and required her help in picking out the fleas; and exacted from this woman of lordly lineage that she should not blush to put her sweet fingers in a foul apron. Then, believing that he was free to have his pleasure, he ventured to put his longing palms within her gown and to set his unsteady hands close to her breast. But she, looking narrowly, was aware of the presence of the old man whom she once had known, and felt ashamed. She spurned the wanton and libidinous fingering, and repulsed the unchaste hands, telling the man also that he had need of arms, and urging him to cease his lewd sport.

Starkad, who had sat down by the door, with the hat muffling his head, had already become so deeply enraged at this sight, that he could not find patience to hold his hand any longer, but put away his covering and clapped his right hand to his sword to draw it. Then the smith, whose only skill was in lewdness, faltered with sudden alarm, and finding that it had come to fighting, gave up all hope of defending himself, and saw in flight the only remedy for his need. Thus it was as hard to break out of the door, of which the enemy held the approach, as it was grievous to await the smiter within the house. At last necessity forced him to put an end to his delay, and he judged that a hazard wherein there lay but the smallest chance of safety was more desirable than sure and manifest danger. Also, hard as it was to fly, the danger being so close, yet he desired flight because it seemed to bring him aid, and to be the nearer way to safety; and he cast aside delay, which seemed to be an evil bringing not the smallest help, but perhaps irretrievable ruin. But just as he gained the threshold, the old man watching at the door smote him through the hams, and there, half dead, he tottered and fell. For the smiter thought he ought carefully to avoid lending his illustrious hands to the death of a vile cinder-blower, and considered that ignominy would punish his shameless passion worse than death. Thus some men think that he who suffers misfortune is worse punished than he who is slain outright. Thus it was brought about, that the maiden, who had never had parents to tend her, came to behave like a woman of well-trained nature, and did the part, as it were, of a zealous guardian to herself. And when Starkad, looking round, saw that the household sorrowed over the late loss of their master, he heaped shame on the wounded man with more invective, and thus began to mock:

"Why is the house silent and aghast? What makes this new grief? Or where now rest that doting husband whom the steel has just punished for his shameful love? Keeps he still aught of his pride and lazy wantonness? Holds he to his quest, glows his lust as hot as before? Let him while away an hour with me in converse, and allay with friendly words my hatred of yesterday. Let your visage come forth with better cheer; let not lamentation resound in the house, or suffer the faces to become dulled with sorrow.

"Wishing to know who burned with love for the maiden, and was deeply enamoured of my beloved ward, I put on a cap, lest my familiar face might betray me. Then comes in that wanton smith, with lewd steps, bending his thighs this way and that with studied gesture, and likewise making eyes as he ducked all ways. His covering was a mantle fringed with beaver, his sandals were inlaid with gems, his cloak was decked with gold. Gorgeous ribbons bound his plaited hair, and a many-coloured band drew tight his straying locks. Hence grew a sluggish and puffed-up temper; he fancied that wealth was birth, and money forefathers, and reckoned his fortune more by riches than by blood. Hence came pride unto him, and arrogance led to fine attire. For the wretch began to think that his dress made him equal to the high-born; he, the cinder-blower, who hunts the winds with hides, and puffs with constant draught, who rakes the ashes with his fingers, and often by drawing back the bellows takes in the air, and with a little fan makes a breath and kindles the smouldering fires! Then he goes to the lap of the girl, and leaning close, says, 'Maiden, comb my hair and catch the skipping fleas, and remove what stings my skin.' Then he sat and spread his arms that sweated under the gold, lolling on the smooth cushion and leaning back on his elbow, wishing to flaunt his adornment, just as a barking brute unfolds the gathered coils of its twisted tail. But she knew me, and began to check her lover and rebuff his wanton hands; and, declaring that it was I, she said, 'Refrain thy fingers, check thy promptings, take heed to appease the old man sitting close by the doors. The sport will turn to sorrow. I think Starkad is here, and his slow gaze scans thy doings.' The smith answered: 'Turn not pale at the peaceful raven and the ragged old man; never has that mighty one whom thou fearest stooped to such common and base attire. The strong man loves shining raiment, and looks for clothes to match his courage.' Then I uncovered and drew my sword, and as the smith fled I clove his privy parts; his hams were laid open, cut away from the bone; they showed his entrails. Presently I rise and crush the girl's mouth with my fist, and draw blood from her bruised nostril. Then her lips, used to evil laughter, were wet with tears mingled with blood, and foolish love paid for all the sins it committed with soft eyes. Over is the sport of the hapless woman who rushed on, blind with desire, like a maddened mare, and makes her lust the grave of her beauty. Thou deservest to be sold for a price to foreign peoples and to grind at the mill, unless blood pressed from thy breasts prove thee falsely accused, and thy nipple's lack of milk clear thee of the crime. Howbeit, I think thee free from this fault; yet bear not tokens of suspicion, nor lay thyself open to lying tongues, nor give thyself to the chattering populace to gird at. Rumour hurts many, and a lying slander often harms. A little word deceives the thoughts of common men. Respect thy grandsires, honour thy fathers, forget not thy parents, value thy forefathers; let thy flesh and blood keep its fame. What madness came on thee? And thou, shameless smith, what fate drove thee in thy lust to attempt a high-born race? Or who sped thee, maiden, worthy of the lordliest pillows, to loves obscure? Tell me, how durst thou taste with thy rosy lips a mouth reeking of ashes, or endure on thy breast hands filthy with charcoal, or bring close to thy side the arms that turn the live coals over, and put the palms hardened with the use of the tongs to thy pure cheeks, and embrace the head sprinkled with embers, taking it to thy bright arms?

"I remember how smiths differ from one another, for once they smote me. All share alike the name of their calling, but the hearts beneath are different in temper. I judge those best who weld warriors' swords and spears for the battle, whose temper shows their courage, who betoken their hearts by the sternness of their calling, whose work declares their prowess. There are also some to whom the hollow mould yields bronze, as they make the likeness of divers things in molten gold, who smelt the veins and recast the metal. But Nature has fashioned these of a softer temper, and has crushed with cowardice the hands which she has gifted with rare skill. Often such men, while the heat of the blast melts the bronze that is poured in the mould, craftily filch flakes of gold from the lumps, when the vessel thirsts after the metal they have stolen."

So speaking, Starkad got as much pleasure from his words as from his works, and went back to Halfdan, embracing his service with the closest friendship, and never ceasing from the exercise of war; so that he weaned his mind from delights, and vexed it with incessant application to arms.

Now Ingild had two sisters, Helga and Asa; Helga was of full age to marry, while Asa was younger and unripe for wedlock. Then Helge the Norwegian was moved with desire to ask for Helga for his wife, and embarked. Now he had equipped his vessel so luxuriously that he had lordly sails decked with gold, held up also on gilded masts, and tied with crimson ropes. When he arrived Ingild promised to grant him his wish if, to test his reputation publicly, he would first venture to meet in battle the champions pitted against him. Helge did not flinch at the terms; he answered that he would most gladly abide by the compact. And so the troth-plight of the future marriage was most ceremoniously solemnized.

A story is remembered that there had grown up at the same time, on the Isle of Zealand, the nine sons of a certain prince, all highly gifted with strength and valour, the eldest of whom was Anganty. This last was a rival suitor for the same maiden; and when he saw that the match which he had been denied was promised to Helge, he challenged him to a struggle, wishing to fight away his vexation. Helge agreed to the proposed combat. The hour of the fight was appointed for the wedding-day by the common wish of both. For any man who, being challenged, refused to fight, used to be covered with disgrace in the sight of all men. Thus Helge was tortured on the one side by the shame of refusing the battle, on the other by the dread of waging it. For he thought himself attacked unfairly and counter to the universal laws of combat, as he had apparently undertaken to fight nine men single-handed. While he was thus reflecting his betrothed told him that he would need help, and counselled him to refrain from the battle, wherein it seemed he would encounter only death and disgrace, especially as he had not stipulated for any definite limit to the number of those who were to be his opponents. He should therefore avoid the peril, and consult his safety by appealing to Starkad, who was sojourning among the Swedes; since it was his way to help the distressed, and often to interpose successfully to retrieve some dismal mischance.

Then Helge, who liked the counsel thus given very well, took a small escort and went into Sweden; and when he reached its most famous city, Upsala, he forbore to enter, but sent in a messenger who was to invite Starkad to the wedding of Frode's daughter, after first greeting him respectfully to try him. This courtesy stung Starkad like an insult. He looked sternly on the youth, and said, "That had he not had his beloved Frode named in his instructions, he should have paid dearly for his senseless mission. He must think that Starkad, like some buffoon or trencherman, was accustomed to rush off to the reek of a distant kitchen for the sake of a richer diet." Helge, when his servant had told him this, greeted the old man in the name of Frode's daughter, and asked him to share a battle which he had accepted upon being challenged, saying that he was not equal to it by himself, the terms of the agreement being such as to leave the number of his adversaries uncertain. Starkad, when he had heard the time and place of the combat, not only received the suppliant well, but also encouraged him with the offer of aid, and told him to go back to Denmark with his companions, telling him that he would find his way to him by a short and secret path. Helge departed, and if we may trust report, Starkad, by sheer speed of foot, travelled in one day's journeying over as great a space as those who went before him are said to have accomplished in twelve; so that both parties, by a chance meeting, reached their journey's end, the palace of Ingild, at the very same time. Here Starkad passed, just as the servants did, along the tables filled with guests; and the aforementioned nine, howling horribly with repulsive gestures, and running about as if they were on the stage, encouraged one another to the battle. Some say that they barked like furious dogs at the champion as he approached. Starkad rebuked them for making themselves look ridiculous with such an unnatural visage, and for clowning with wide grinning cheeks; for from this, he declared, soft and effeminate profligates derived their wanton incontinence. When Starkad was asked banteringly by the nine whether he had valour enough to fight, he answered that doubtless he was strong enough to meet, not merely one, but any number that might come against him. And when the nine heard this they understood that this was the man whom they had heard would come to the succour of Helge from afar. Starkad also, to protect the bride-chamber with a more diligent guard, voluntarily took charge of the watch; and, drawing back the doors of the bedroom, barred them with a sword instead of a bolt, meaning to post himself so as to give undisturbed quiet to their bridal.

When Helge woke, and, shaking off the torpor of sleep, remembered his pledge, he thought of buckling on his armour. But, seeing that a little of the darkness of night yet remained, and wishing to wait for the hour of dawn, he began to ponder the perilous business at hand, when sleep stole on him and sweetly seized him, so that he took himself back to bed laden with slumber. Starkad, coming in on him at daybreak, saw him locked asleep in the arms of his wife, and would not suffer him to be vexed with a sudden shock, or summoned from his quiet slumbers; lest he should seem to usurp the duty of wakening him and breaking upon the sweetness of so new a union, all because of cowardice. He thought it, therefore, more handsome to meet the peril alone than to gain a comrade by disturbing the pleasure of another. So he quietly retraced his steps, and scorning his enemies, entered the field which in our tongue is called Roliung, and finding a seat under the slope of a certain hill, he exposed himself to wind and snow. Then, as though the gentle airs of spring weather were breathing upon him, he put off his cloak, and set to picking out the fleas. He also cast on the briars a purple mantle which Helga had lately given him, that no clothing might seem to lend him shelter against the raging shafts of hail. Then the champions came and climbed the hill on the opposite side; and, seeking a spot sheltered from the winds wherein to sit, they lit a fire and drove off the cold. At last, not seeing Starkad, they sent a men to the crest of the hill, to watch his coming more clearly, as from a watch-tower. This man climbed to the top of the lofty mountain, and saw, on its sloping side, an old man covered shoulder-high with the snow that showered down. He asked him if he was the man who was to fight according to the promise. Starkad declared that he was. Then the rest came up and asked him whether he had resolved to meet them all at once or one by one. But he said, "Whenever a surly pack of curs yelps at me, I commonly send them flying all at once, and not in turn." Thus he let them know that he would rather fight with them all together than one by one, thinking that his enemies should be spurned with words first and deeds afterwards.

The fight began furiously almost immediately, and he felled six of them without receiving any wound in return; and though the remaining three wounded him so hard in seventeen places that most of his bowels gushed out of his belly, he slew them notwithstanding, like their brethren. Disembowelled, with failing strength, he suffered from dreadful straits of thirst, and, crawling on his knees in his desire to find a draught, he longed for water from the streamlet that ran close by. But when he saw it was tainted with gore he was disgusted at the look of the water, and refrained from its infected draught. For Anganty had been struck down in the waves of the river, and had dyed its course so deep with his red blood that it seemed now to flow not with water, but with some ruddy liquid. So Starkad thought it nobler that his bodily strength should fail than that he should borrow strength from so foul a beverage. Therefore, his force being all but spent, he wriggled on his knees, up to a rock that happened to be lying near, and for some little while lay leaning against it. A hollow in its surface is still to be seen, just as if his weight as he lay had marked it with a distinct impression of his body. But I think this appearance is due to human handiwork, for it seems to pass all belief that the hard and uncleavable rock should so imitate the softness of wax, as, merely by the contact of a man leaning on it, to present the appearance of a man having sat there, and assume concavity for ever.

A certain man, who chanced to be passing by in a cart, saw Starkad wounded almost all over his body. Equally aghast and amazed, he turned and drove closer, asking what reward he should have if he were to tend and heal his wounds. But Starkad would rather be tortured by grievous wounds than use the service of a man of base estate, and first asked his birth and calling. The man said that his profession was that of a sergeant. Starkad, not content with despising him, also spurned him with revilings, because, neglecting all honourable business, he followed the calling of a hanger-on; and because he had tarnished his whole career with ill repute, thinking the losses of the poor his own gains; suffering none to be innocent, ready to inflict wrongful accusation upon all men, most delighted at any lamentable turn in the fortunes of another; and toiling most at his own design, namely of treacherously spying out all men's doings, and seeking some traitorous occasion to censure the character of the innocent.

As this first man departed, another came up, promising aid and remedies. Like the last comer, he was bidden to declare his condition; and he said that he had a certain man's handmaid to wife, and was doing peasant service to her master in order to set her free. Starkad refused to accept his help, because he had married in a shameful way by taking a slave to his embrace. Had he had a shred of virtue he should at least have disdained to be intimate with the slave of another, but should have enjoyed some freeborn partner of his bed. What a mighty man, then, must we deem Starkad, who, when enveloped in the most deadly perils, showed himself as great in refusing aid as in receiving wounds!

When this man departed a woman chanced to approach and walk past the old man. She came up to him in order to wipe his wounds, but was first bidden to declare what was her birth and calling. She said that she was a handmaid used to grinding at the mill. Starkad then asked her if she had children; and when he was told that she had a female child, he told her to go home and give the breast to her squalling daughter; for he thought it most uncomely that he should borrow help from a woman of the lowest degree. Moreover, he knew that she could nourish her own flesh and blood with milk better than she could minister to the wounds of a stranger.

As the woman was departing, a young man came riding up in a cart. He saw the old man, and drew near to minister to his wounds. On being asked who he was, he said his father was a labourer, and added that he was used to the labours of a peasant. Starkad praised his origin, and pronounced that his calling was also most worthy of honour; for, he said, such men sought a livelihood by honourable traffic in their labour, inasmuch as they knew not of any gain, save what they had earned by the sweat of their brow. He also thought that a country life was justly to be preferred even to the most splendid riches; for the most wholesome fruits of it seemed to be born and reared in the shelter of a middle estate, halfway between magnificence and squalor. But he did not wish to pass the kindness of the youth unrequited, and rewarded the esteem he had shown him with the mantle he had cast among the thorns. So the peasant's son approached, replaced the parts of his belly that had been torn away, and bound up with a plait of withies the mass of intestines that had fallen out. Then he took the old man to his car, and with the most zealous respect carried him away to the palace.

Meantime Helga, in language betokening the greatest wariness, began to instruct her husband, saying that she knew that Starkad, as soon as he came back from conquering the champions, would punish him for his absence, thinking that he had inclined more to sloth and lust than to his promise to fight as appointed. Therefore he must withstand Starkad boldly, because he always spared the brave but loathed the coward. Helge respected equally her prophecy and her counsel, and braced his soul and body with a glow of valorous enterprise. Starkad, when he had been driven to the palace, heedless of the pain of his wounds, leaped swiftly out of the cart, and just like a man who was well from top to toe, burst into the bridal-chamber, shattering the doors with his fist. Then Helge leapt from his bed, and, as he had been taught by the counsel of his wife, plunged his blade full at Starkad's forehead. And since he seemed to be meditating a second blow, and to be about to make another thrust with his sword, Helga flew quickly from the couch, caught up a shield, and, by interposing it, saved the old man from impending destruction; for, notwithstanding, Helge with a stronger stroke of his blade smote the shield right through to the boss. Thus the praiseworthy wit of the woman aided her friend, and her hand saved him whom her counsel had injured; for she protected the old man by her deed, as well as her husband by her warning. Starkad was induced by this to let Helge go scot-free;

saying that a man whose ready and assured courage so surely betokened manliness, ought to be spared; for he vowed that a man ill deserved death whose brave spirit was graced with such a dogged will to resist.

Starkad went back to Sweden before his wounds had been treated with medicine, or covered with a single scar. Halfdan had been killed by his rivals; and Starkad, after quelling certain rebels, set up Siward as the heir to his father's sovereignty. With him he sojourned a long time; but when he heard—for the rumour spread—that Ingild, the son of Frode (who had been treacherously slain), was perversely minded, and instead of punishing his father's murderers, bestowed upon them kindness and friendship, he was vexed with stinging wrath at so dreadful a crime. And, resenting that a youth of such great parts should have renounced his descent from his glorious father, he hung on his shoulders a mighty mass of charcoal, as though it were some costly burden, and made his way to Denmark. When asked by those he met why he was taking along so unusual a load, he said that he would sharpen the dull wits of King Ingild to a point by bits of charcoal. So he accomplished a swift and headlong journey, as though at a single breath, by a short and speedy track; and at last, becoming the guest of Ingild, he went up, as his custom was, in to the seat appointed for the great men; for he had been used to occupy the highest post of distinction with the kings of the last generation.

When the queen came in, and saw him covered over with filth and clad in the mean, patched clothes of a peasant, the ugliness of her guest's dress made her judge him with little heed; and, measuring the man by the clothes, she reproached him with crassness of wit, because he had gone before greater men in taking his place at table, and had assumed a seat that was too good for his boorish attire. She bade him quit the place, that he might not touch the cushions with his dress, which was fouler than it should have been. For she put down to crassness and brazenness what Starkad only did from proper pride; she knew not that on a high seat of honour the mind sometimes shines brighter than the raiment. The spirited old man obeyed, though vexed at the rebuff, and with marvellous self-control choked down the insult which his bravery so ill deserved; uttering at this disgrace he had received neither word nor groan. But he could not long bear to hide the bitterness of his anger in silence. Rising, and retreating to the furthest end of the palace, he flung his body against the walls; and strong as they were, he so battered them with the shock, that the beams quaked mightily; and he nearly brought the house down in a crash. Thus, stung not only with his rebuff, but with the shame of having poverty cast in his teeth, he unsheathed his wrath against the insulting speech of the queen with inexorable sternness.

Ingild, on his return from hunting, scanned him closely, and, when he noticed that he neither looked cheerfully about, nor paid him the respect of rising, saw by the sternness written on his brow that it was Starkad. For when he noted his hands horny with fighting, his scars in front, the force and fire of his eye, he perceived that a man whose body was seamed with so many traces of wounds had no weakling soul. He therefore rebuked his wife, and charged her roundly to put away her haughty tempers, and to soothe and soften with kind words and gentle offices the man she had reviled; to comfort him with food and drink, and refresh him with kindly converse; saying, that this man had been appointed his tutor by his father long ago, and had been a most tender guardian of his childhood. Then, learning too late the temper of the old man, she turned her harshness into gentleness, and respectfully waited on him whom she had rebuffed and railed at with bitter revilings. The angry hostess changed her part, and became the most fawning of flatterers. She wished to check his anger with her attentiveness; and her fault was the less, inasmuch as she was so quick in ministering to him after she had been chidden. But she paid dearly for it, for she presently beheld stained with the blood of her brethren the place where she had flouted and rebuffed the brave old man from his seat.

Now, in the evening, Ingild took his meal with the sons of Swerting, and fell to a magnificent feast, loading the tables with the profusest dishes. With friendly invitation he kept the old man back from leaving the revel too early; as though the delights of elaborate dainties could have undermined that staunch and sturdy virtue! But when Starkad had set eyes on these things, he scorned so wanton a use of them; and, not to give way a whit to foreign fashions, he steeled his appetite against these tempting delicacies with the self-restraint which was his greatest strength. He would not suffer his repute as a soldier to be impaired by the allurements of an orgy. For his valour loved thrift, and was a stranger to all superfluity of food, and averse to feasting in excess. For his was a courage which never at any moment had time to make luxury of aught account, and always forewent pleasure to pay due heed to virtue. So, when he saw that the antique character of self-restraint, and all good old customs, were being corrupted by new-fangled luxury and sumptuosity, he wished to be provided with a morsel fitter for a peasant, and scorned the costly and lavish feast.

Spurning profuse indulgence in food, Starkad took some smoky and rather rancid fare, appeasing his hunger with a bitter relish because more simply; and being unwilling to enfeeble his true valour with the tainted sweetness of sophisticated foreign dainties, or break the rule of antique plainness by such strange idolatries of the belly. He was also very wroth that they should go to the extravagance of having the same meat both roasted and boiled at the same meal; for he considered an eatable which was steeped in the vapours of the kitchen, and which the skill of the cook rubbed over with many kinds of flavours, in the light of a monstrosity.

Unlike Starkad Ingild flung the example of his ancestors to the winds, and gave himself freer licence of innovation in the fashions of the table than the custom of his fathers allowed. For when he had once abandoned himself to the manners of Teutonland, he did not blush to yield to its unmanly wantonness. No slight incentives to debauchery have flowed down our country's throat from that sink of a land.

Hence came magnificent dishes, sumptuous kitchens, the base service of cooks, and all sorts of abominable sausages. Hence came our adoption, wandering from the ways of our fathers, of a more dissolute dress. Thus our country, which cherished self-restraint as its native quality, has gone begging to our neighbours for luxury; whose allurements so charmed Ingild, that he did not think it shameful to requite wrongs with kindness; nor did the grievous murder of his father make him heave one sigh of bitterness when it crossed his mind.

But the queen would not depart without effecting her purpose. Thinking that presents would be the best way to banish the old man's anger, she took off her own head a band of marvellous handiwork, and put it in his lap as he supped: desiring to buy his favour since she could not blunt his courage. But Starkad, whose bitter resentment was not yet abated, flung it back in the face of the giver, thinking that in such a gift there was more scorn than respect. And he was wise not to put this strange ornament of female dress upon the head that was all bescarred and used to the helmet; for he knew that the locks of a man ought not to wear a woman's head-band. Thus he avenged slight with slight, and repaid with retorted scorn the disdain he had received; thereby bearing himself well-nigh as nobly in avenging his disgrace as he had borne himself in enduring it.

To the soul of Starkad reverence for Frode was grappled with hooks of love. Drawn to him by deeds of bounty, countless kindnesses, he could not be wheedled into giving up his purpose of revenge by any sort of alluring complaisance. Even now, when Frode was no more, he was eager to pay the gratitude due to his benefits, and to requite the kindness of the dead, whose loving disposition and generous friendship he had experienced while he lived. For he bore graven so deeply in his heart the grievous picture of Frode's murder, that his honour for that most famous captain could never be plucked from the inmost chamber of his soul; and therefore he did not hesitate to rank his ancient friendship before the present kindness. Besides, when he recalled the previous affront, he could not thank the complaisance that followed; he could not put aside the disgraceful wound to his self-respect. For the memory of benefits or injuries ever sticks more firmly in the minds of brave men than in those of weaklings. For he had not the habits of those who follow their friends in prosperity and quit them in adversity, who pay more regard to fortune than to looks, and sit closer to their own gain than to charity toward others.

But the woman held to her purpose, seeing that even so she could not win the old man to convivial mirth. Continuing with yet more lavish courtesy her efforts to soothe him, and to heap more honours on the guest, she bade a piper strike up, and started music to melt his unbending rage. For she wanted to unnerve his stubborn nature by means of cunning sounds. But the cajolery of pipe or string was just as powerless to enfeeble that dogged warrior. When he heard it, he felt that the respect paid him savoured more of pretence than of love. Hence the crestfallen performer seemed to be playing to a statue rather than a man, and learnt that it is vain for buffoons to assail with their tricks a settled and weighty sternness, and that a mighty mass cannot be shaken with the idle puffing of the lips. For Starkad had set his face so firmly in his stubborn wrath, that he seemed not a whit easier to move than ever. For the inflexibility which he owed his vows was not softened either by the strain of the lute or the enticements of the palate; and he thought that more respect should be paid to his strenuous and manly purpose than to the tickling of the ears or the lures of the feast. Accordingly he flung the bone, which he had stripped in eating the meat, in the face of the harlequin, and drove the wind violently out of his puffed cheeks, so that they collapsed. By this he showed how his austerity loathed the clatter of the stage; for his ears were stopped with anger and open to no influence of delight. This reward, befitting an actor, punished an unseemly performance with a shameful wage. For Starkad excellently judged the man's deserts, and bestowed a shankbone for the piper to pipe on, requiting his soft service with a hard fee. None could say whether the actor piped or wept the louder; he showed by his bitter flood of tears how little place bravery has in the breasts of the dissolute. For the fellow was a mere minion of pleasure, and had never learnt to bear the assaults of calamity. This man's hurt was ominous of the carnage that was to follow at the feast. Right well did Starkad's spirit, heedful of sternness, hold with stubborn gravity to steadfast revenge; for he was as much disgusted at the lute as others were delighted, and repaid the unwelcome service by insultingly flinging a bone; thus avowing that he owed a greater debt to the glorious dust of his mighty friend than to his shameless and infamous ward.

But when Starkad saw that the slayers of Frode were in high favour with the king, his stern glances expressed the mighty wrath which he harboured, and his face betrayed what he felt. The visible fury of his gaze betokened the secret tempest in his heart. At last, when Ingild tried to appease him with royal fare, he spurned the dainty. Satisfied with cheap and common food, he utterly spurned outlandish delicacies; he was used to plain diet, and would not pamper his palate with any delightful flavour. When he was asked why he had refused the generous attention of the king with such a clouded brow, he said that he had come to Denmark to find the son of Frode, not a man who crammed his proud and gluttonous stomach with rich elaborate feasts. For the Teuton extravagance which the king favoured had led him, in his longing for the pleasures of abundance, to set to the fire again, for roasting, dishes which had been already boiled. Thereupon he could not forbear from attacking Ingild's character, but poured out the whole bitterness of his reproaches on his head. He condemned his unfilial spirit, because he gaped with repletion and vented his squeamishness in filthy hawkings; because, following the lures of the Saxons, he strayed and departed far from soberness; because he was so lacking in manhood as not to pursue even the faintest shadow of it. But, declared Starkad, he bore the heaviest load of infamy, because, even when he first began to see service, he forgot to avenge his father, to whose butchers, forsaking the law of nature, he was kind and attentive. Men whose deserts were most vile he welcomed with loving affection; and not only did he let those go scot-free, whom he should have punished most sharply, but he even judged them fit persons to live with and entertain at his table, whereas he should rather have put them to death. Hereupon Starkad is also said to have sung as follows:

"Let the unwarlike youth yield to the aged, let him honour all the years of him that is old. When a man is brave, let none reproach the number of his days.

"Though the hair of the ancient whiten with age, their valour stays still the same; nor shall the lapse of time have power to weaken their manly heart.

"I am elbowed away by the offensive guest, who taints with vice his outward show of goodness, whilst he is the slave of his belly and prefers his daily dainties to anything.

"When I was counted as a comrade of Frode, I ever sat in the midst of warriors on a high seat in the hall, and I was the first of the princes to take my meal.

"Now, the lot of a nobler age is reversed; I am shut in a corner, I am like the fish that seeks shelter as it wanders to and fro hidden in the waters.

"I, who used surely in the former age to lie back on a couch handsomely spread, am now thrust among the hindmost and driven from the crowded hall.

"Perchance I had been driven on my back at the doors, had not the wall struck my side and turned me back, and had not the beam in the way made it hard for me to fly when I was thrust forth.

"I am baited with the jeers of the court-folk; I am not received as a guest should be; I am girded at with harsh gibing, and stung with babbling taunts.

"I am a stranger, and would gladly know what news are spread abroad by busy rumour; what is the course of events; what the order of the land; what is doing in your country.

"Thou, Ingild, buried in sin, why dost thou tarry in the task of avenging thy father? Wilt thou think tranquilly of the slaughter of thy righteous sire?

"Why dost thou, sluggard, think only of feasting, and lean thy belly back in ease, more effeminate than harlots? Is the avenging of thy slaughtered father a little thing to thee?

"When last I left thee, Frode, I learned by my prophetic soul that thou, mightiest of kings, wouldst surely perish by the sword of enemies.

"And while I travelled long in the land, a warning groan rose in my soul, which augured that thereafter I was never to see thee more.

"Wo is me, that then I was far away, harrying the farthest peoples of the earth, when the traitorous guest aimed craftily at the throat of his king.

"Else I would either have shown myself the avenger of my lord, or have shared his fate and fallen where he fell, and would joyfully have followed the blessed king in one and the same death.

"I have not come to indulge in gluttonous feasting, the sin whereof I will strive to chastise; nor will I take mine ease, nor the delights of the fat belly.

"No famous king has ever set me before in the middle by the strangers. I have been wont to sit in the highest seats among friends.

"I have come from Sweden, travelling over wide lands, thinking that I should be rewarded, if only I had the joy to find the son of my beloved Frode.

"But I sought a brave man, and I have come to a glutton, a king who is the slave of his belly and of vice, whose liking has been turned back towards wantonness by filthy pleasure.

"Famous is the speech men think that Halfdan spoke: he warned us it would soon come to pass that an understanding father should beget a witless son.

"Though the heir be deemed degenerate, I will not suffer the wealth of mighty Frode to profit strangers or to be made public like plunder."

At these words the queen trembled, and she took from her head the ribbon with which she happened, in woman's fashion, to be adorning her hair, and proffered it to the enraged old man, as though she could avert his anger with a gift. Starkad in anger flung it back most ignominiously in the face of the giver, and began again in a loud voice:

"Take hence, I pray thee, thy woman's gift, and set back thy headgear on thy head; no brave man assumes the chaplets that befit Love only.

"For it is amiss that the hair of men that are ready for battle should be bound back with wreathed gold; such attire is right for the throngs of the soft and effeminate.

"But take this gift to thy husband, who loves luxury, whose finger itches, while he turns over the rump and handles the flesh of the bird roasted brown.

"The flighty and skittish wife of Ingild longs to observe the fashions of the Teutons; she prepares the orgy and makes ready the artificial dainties.

"For she tickles the palate with a new-fangled feast; she pursues the zest of an unknown flavour, raging to load all the tables with dishes yet more richly than before.

"She gives her lord wine to drink in bowls, pondering all things with zealous preparation; she bids the cooked meats be roasted, and intends them for a second fire.

"Wantonly she feeds her husband like a hog; a shameless whore, trusting . . . .

"She roasts the boiled, and recooks the roasted meats, planning the meal with spendthrift extravagance, careless of right and wrong, practising sin, a foul woman.

"Wanton in arrogance, a soldier of Love, longing for dainties, she abjures the fair ways of self-control, and also provides devices for gluttony.

"With craving stomach she desires turnip strained in a smooth pan, cakes with thin juice, and shellfish in rows.

"I do not remember the Great Frode putting his hand to the sinews of birds, or tearing the rump of a cooked fowl with crooked thumb.

"What former king could have been so gluttonous as to stir the stinking filthy flesh, or rummage in the foul back of a bird with plucking fingers?

"The food of valiant men is raw; no need, methinks, of sumptuous tables for those whose stubborn souls are bent on warfare.

"It had been fitter for thee to have torn the stiff beard, biting hard with thy teeth, than greedily to have drained the bowl of milk with thy wide mouth.

"We fled from the offence of the sumptuous kitchen; we stayed our stomach with rancid fare; few in the old days loved cooked juices.

"A dish with no sauce of herbs gave us the flesh of rams and swine. We partook temperately, tainting nothing with bold excess.

"Thou who now lickest the milk-white fat, put on, prithee, the spirit of a man; remember Frode, and avenge thy father's death.

"The worthless and cowardly heart shall perish, and shall not parry the thrust of death by flight, though it bury itself in a valley, or crouch in darkling dens.

"Once we were eleven princes, devoted followers of King Hakon, and here Geigad sat above Helge in the order of the meal.

"Geigad used to appease the first pangs of hunger with a dry rump of ham; and plenty of hard crust quelled the craving of his stomach.

"No one asked for a sickly morsel; all took their food in common; the meal of mighty men cost but slight display.

"The commons shunned foreign victual, and the greatest lusted not for a feast; even the king remembered to live temperately at little cost.

"Scorning to look at the mead, he drank the fermented juice of Ceres; he shrank not from the use of undercooked meats, and hated the roast.

"The board used to stand with slight display, a modest salt-cellar showed the measure of its cost; lest the wise ways of antiquity should in any wise be changed by foreign usage.

"Of old, no man put flagons or mixing-bowls on the tables; the steward filled the cup from the butt, and there was no abundance of adorned vessels.

"No one who honoured past ages put the smooth wine-jars beside the tankards, and of old no bedizened lackey heaped the platter with dainties.

"Nor did the vainglorious host deck the meal with little salt-shell or smooth cup; but all has been now abolished in shameful wise by the new-fangled manners.

"Who would ever have borne to take money in ransom for the death of a lost parent, or to have asked a foe for a gift to atone for the murder of a father?

"What strong heir or well-starred son would have sat side by side with such as these, letting a shameful bargain utterly unnerve the warrior?

"Wherefore, when the honours of kings are sung, and bards relate the victories of captains, I hide my face for shame in my mantle, sick at heart.

"For nothing shines in thy trophies, worthy to be recorded by the pen; no heir of Frode is named in the roll of the honourable.

"Why dost thou vex me with insolent gaze, thou who honourest the foe guilty of thy father's blood, and art thought only to take thy vengeance with loaves and warm soup?

"When men speak well of the avengers of crimes, then long thou to lose thy quick power of hearing, that thy impious spirit may not be ashamed.

"For oft has the virtue of another vexed a heart that knows its guilt, and the malice in the breast is abashed by the fair report of the good.

"Though thou go to the East, or live sequestered in the countries of the West, or whether, driven thence, thou seek the midmost place of the earth;

"Whether thou revisit the cold quarter of the heaven where the pole is to be seen, and carries on the sphere with its swift spin, and looks down upon the neighbouring Bear;

"Shame shall accompany thee far, and shall smite thy countenance with heavy disgrace, when the united assembly of the great kings is taking pastime.

"Since everlasting dishonour awaits thee, thou canst not come amidst the ranks of the famous; and in every clime thou shalt pass thy days in infamy.

"The fates have given Frode an offspring born into the world when gods were adverse, whose desires have been enthralled by crime and ignoble lust.

"Even as in a ship all things foul gather to the filthy hollow of the bilge, even so hath a flood of vices poured into Ingild.

"Therefore, in terror of thy shame being published, thou shalt lie crushed in the corners of the land, sluggish on thy foul hearth, and never to be seen in the array of the famous.

"Then shalt thou shake thy beard at thine evil fate, kept down by the taunts of thy mistresses, when thy paramour galls thy ear with her querulous cries.

"Since chill fear retards thy soul, and thou dreadest to become the avenger of thy sire, thou art utterly degenerate, and thy ways are like a slave's.

"It would have needed scant preparation to destroy thee; even as if a man should catch and cut the throat of a kid, or slit the weazand of a soft sheep and butcher it.

"Behold, a son of the tyrant Swerting shall take the inheritance of Denmark after thee; he whose slothful sister thou keepest in infamous union.

"Whilst thou delightest to honour thy bride, laden with gems and shining in gold apparel, we burn with an indignation that is linked with shame, lamenting thy infamies.

"When thou art stirred by furious lust, our mind is troubled, and recalls the fashion of ancient times, and bids us grieve sorely.

"For we rate otherwise than thou the crime of the foes whom now thou holdest in honour; wherefore the face of this age is a burden to me, remembering the ancient ways.

"I would crave no greater blessing, O Frode, if I might see those guilty of thy murder duly punished for such a crime."

Now he prevailed so well by this stirring counsel, that his reproach served like a flint wherewith to strike a blazing flame of valour in the soul that had been chill and slack. For the king had at first heard the song inattentively; but, stirred by the earnest admonition of his guardian, he conceived in his heart a tardy fire of revenge; and, forgetting the reveller, he changed into the foeman. At last he leapt up from where he lay, and poured the whole flood of his anger on those at table with him; insomuch that he unsheathed his sword upon the sons of Swerting with bloody ruthlessness, and aimed with drawn blade at the throats of those whose gullets he had pampered with the pleasures of the table. These men he forthwith slew; and by so doing he drowned the holy rites of the table in blood. He sundered the feeble bond of their league, and exchanged a shameful revel for enormous cruelty; the host became the foe, and that vilest slave of excess the bloodthirsty agent of revenge. For the vigorous pleading of his counsellor bred a breath of courage in his soft and unmanly youth; it drew out his valour from its lurking-place, and renewed it, and so fashioned it that the authors of a most grievous murder were punished even as they deserved. For the young man's valour had been, not quenched, but only in exile, and the aid of an old man had drawn it out into the light; and it accomplished a deed which was all the greater for its tardiness; for it was somewhat nobler to steep the cups in blood than in wine. What a spirit, then, must we think that old man had, who by his eloquent adjuration expelled from that king's mind its infinite sin, and who, bursting the bonds of iniquity, implanted a most effectual seed of virtue. Starkad aided the king with equal achievements; and not only showed the most complete courage in his own person, but summoned back that which had been rooted out of the heart of another. When the deed was done, he thus begun:

"King Ingild, farewell; thy heart, full of valour, hath now shown a deed of daring. The spirit that reigns in thy body is revealed by its fair beginning; nor did there lack deep counsel in thy heart, though thou wert silent till this hour; for thou dost redress by thy bravery what delay had lost, and redeemest the sloth of thy spirit by mighty valour. Come now, let us rout the rest, and let none escape the peril which all alike deserve. Let the crime come home to the culprit; let the sin return and crush its contriver.

"Let the servants take up in a car the bodies of the slain, and let the attendant quickly bear out the carcases. Justly shall they lack the last rites; they are unworthy to be covered with a mound; let no funeral procession or pyre suffer them the holy honour of a barrow; let them be scattered to rot in the fields, to be consumed by the beaks of birds; let them taint the country all about with their deadly corruption.

"Do thou too, king, if thou hast any wit, flee thy savage bride, lest the she-wolf bring forth a litter like herself, and a beast spring from thee that shall hurt its own father.

"Tell me, Rote, continual derider of cowards, thinkest thou that we have avenged Frode enough, when we have spent seven deaths on the vengeance of one? Lo, those are borne out dead who paid homage not to thy sway in deed, but only in show, and though obsequious they planned treachery. But I always cherished this hope, that noble fathers have noble offspring, who will follow in their character the lot which they received by their birth. Therefore, Ingild, better now than in time past dost thou deserve to be called lord of Leire and of Denmark.

"When, O King Hakon, I was a beardless youth, and followed thy leading and command in warfare, I hated luxury and wanton souls, and practiced only wars. Training body and mind together, I banished every unholy thing from my soul, and shunned the pleasures of the belly, loving deeds of prowess. For those that followed the calling of arms had rough clothing and common gear and short slumbers and scanty rest. Toil drove ease far away, and the time ran by at scanty cost. Not as with some men now, the light of whose reason is obscured by insatiate greed with its blind maw. Some one of these clad in a covering of curiously wrought raiment effeminately guides the fleet-footed (steed), and unknots his dishevelled locks, and lets his hair fly abroad loosely.

"He loves to plead often in the court, and to covet a base pittance, and with this pursuit he comforts his sluggish life, doing with venal tongue the business entrusted to him.

"He outrages the laws by force, he makes armed assault upon men's rights, he tramples on the innocent, he feeds on the wealth of others, he practices debauchery and gluttony, he vexes good fellowship with biting jeers, and goes after harlots as a hoe after the grass.

"The coward falls when battles are lulled in peace. Though he who fears death lie in the heart of the valley, no mantlet shall shelter him. His final fate carries off every living man; doom is not to be averted by skulking. But I, who have shaken the whole world with my slaughters, shall I enjoy a peaceful death? Shall I be taken up to the stars in a quiet end? Shall I die in my bed without a wound?"

BOOK SEVEN.

We are told by historians of old, that Ingild had four sons, of whom three perished in war, while Olaf alone reigned after his father; but some say that Olaf was the son of Ingild's sister, though this opinion is doubtful. Posterity has but an uncertain knowledge of his deeds, which are dim with the dust of antiquity; nothing but the last counsel of his wisdom has been rescued by tradition. For when he was in the last grip of death he took thought for his sons Frode and Harald, and bade them have royal sway, one over the land and the other over the sea, and receive these several powers, not in prolonged possession, but in yearly rotation. Thus their share in the rule was made equal; but Frode, who was the first to have control of the affairs of the sea, earned disgrace from his continual defeats in roving. His calamity was due to his sailors being newly married, and preferring nuptial joys at home to the toils of foreign warfare. After a time Harald, the younger son, received the rule of the sea, and chose soldiers who were unmarried, fearing to be baffled like his brother. Fortune favoured his choice; for he was as glorious a rover as his brother was inglorious; and this earned him his brother's hatred. Moreover, their queens, Signe and Ulfhild, one of whom was the daughter of Siward, King of Sweden, the other of Karl, the governor of Gothland, were continually wrangling as to which was the nobler, and broke up the mutual fellowship of their husbands. Hence Harald and Frode, when their common household was thus shattered, divided up the goods they held in common, and gave more heed to the wrangling altercations of the women than to the duties of brotherly affection.

Moreover, Frode, judging that his brother's glory was a disgrace to himself and brought him into contempt, ordered one of his household to put him to death secretly; for he saw that the man of whom he had the advantage in years was surpassing him in courage. When the deed was done, he had the agent of his treachery privily slain, lest the accomplice should betray the crime. Then, in order to gain the credit of innocence and escape the brand of crime, he ordered a full inquiry to be made into the mischance that had cut off his brother so suddenly. But he could not manage, by all his arts, to escape silent condemnation in the thoughts of the common people. He afterwards asked Karl, "who had killed Harald?" and Karl replied that it was deceitful in him to ask a question about something which he knew quite well. These words earned him his death; for Frode thought that he had reproached him covertly with fratricide.

After this, the lives of Harald and Halfdan, the sons of Harald by Signe the daughter of Karl, were attempted by their uncle. But the guardians devised a cunning method of saving their wards. For they cut off the claws of wolves and tied them to the soles of their feet;

and then made them run along many times so as to harrow up the mud near their dwelling, as well as the ground (then covered with snow), and give the appearance of an attack by wild beasts. Then they killed the children of some bond-women, tore their bodies into little pieces, and scattered their mangled limbs all about. So when the youths were looked for in vain, the scattered limbs were found, the tracks of the beasts were pointed out, and the ground was seen besmeared with blood. It was believed that the boys had been devoured by ravening wolves; and hardly anyone was suffered to doubt so plain a proof that they were mangled. The belief in this spectacle served to protect the wards. They were presently shut up by their guardians in a hollow oak, so that no trace of their being alive should get abroad, and were fed for a long time under pretence that they were dogs; and were even called by hounds' names, to prevent any belief getting abroad that they were hiding.*

Frode alone refused to believe in their death; and he went and inquired of a woman skilled in divination where they were hid. So potent were her spells, that she seemed able, at any distance, to perceive anything, however intricately locked away, and to summon it out to light. She declared that one Ragnar had secretly undertaken to rear them, and had called them by the names of dogs to cover the matter. When the young men found themselves dragged from their hiding by the awful force of her spells, and brought before the eyes of the enchantress, loth to be betrayed by this terrible and imperious compulsion, they flung into her lap a shower of gold which they had received from their guardians. When she had taken the gift, she suddenly feigned death, and fell like one lifeless. Her servants asked the reason why she fell so suddenly; and she declared that the refuge of the sons of Harald was inscrutable; for their wondrous might qualified even the most awful effects of her spells. Thus she was content with a slight benefit, and could not bear to await a greater reward at the king's hands. After this Ragnar, finding that the belief concerning himself and his wards was becoming rife in common talk, took them both away into Funen. Here he was taken by Frode, and confessed that he had put the young men in safe keeping; and he prayed the king to spare the wards whom he had made fatherless, and not to think it a piece of good fortune to be guilty of two unnatural murders. By this speech he changed the king's cruelty into shame; and he promised that if they attempted any plots in their own land, he would give information to the king. Thus he gained safety for his wards, and lived many years in freedom from terror.

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*A parallel is the Lionel-Lancelot story of children saved by being turned into dogs.

When the boys grew up, they went to Zealand, and were bidden by their friends to avenge their father. They vowed that they and their uncle should not both live out the year. When Ragnar found this out, he went by night to the palace, prompted by the recollection of his covenant, and announced that he was come privily to tell the king something he had promised. But the king was asleep, and he would not suffer them to wake him up, because Frode had been used to punish any disturbance of his rest with the sword. So mighty a matter was it thought of old to break the slumbers of a king by untimely intrusion. Frode heard this from the sentries in the morning; and when he perceived that Ragnar had come to tell him of the treachery, he gathered together his soldiers, and resolved to forestall deceit by ruthless measures. Harald's sons had no help for it but to feign madness. For when they found themselves suddenly attacked, they began to behave like maniacs, as if they were distraught. And when Frode thought that they were possessed, he gave up his purpose, thinking it shameful to attack with the sword those who seemed to be turning the sword against themselves. But he was burned to death by them on the following night, and was punished as befitted a fratricide. For they attacked the palace, and first crushing the queen with a mass of stones and then, having set fire to the house, they forced Frode to crawl into a narrow cave that had been cut out long before, and into the dark recesses of tunnels. Here he lurked in hiding and perished, stifled by the reek and smoke.

After Frode was killed, HALFDAN reigned over his country about three years, and then, handing over his sovereignty to his brother Harald as deputy, went roving, and attacked and ravaged Oland and the neighbouring isles, which are severed from contact with Sweden by a winding sound. Here in the winter he beached and entrenched his ships, and spent three years on the expedition. After this he attacked Sweden, and destroyed its king in the field. Afterwards he prepared to meet the king's grandson Erik, the son of his own uncle Frode, in battle; and when he heard that Erik's champion, Hakon, was skillful in blunting swords with his spells, he fashioned, to use for clubbing, a huge mace studded with iron knobs, as if he would prevail by the strength of wood over the power of sorcery. Then—for he was conspicuous beyond all others for his bravery—amid the hottest charges of the enemy, he covered his head with his helmet, and, without a shield, poised his club, and with the help of both hands whirled it against the bulwark of shields before him. No obstacle was so stout but it was crushed to pieces by the blow of the mass that smote it. Thus he overthrew the champion, who ran against him in the battle, with a violent stroke of his weapon. But he was conquered notwithstanding, and fled away into Helsingland, where he went to one Witolf (who had served of old with Harald), to seek tendance for his wounds. This man had spent most of his life in camp; but at last, after the grievous end of his general, he had retreated into this lonely district, where he lived the life of a peasant, and rested from the pursuits of war. Often struck himself by the missiles of the enemy, he had gained no slight skill in leechcraft by constantly tending his own wounds. But if anyone came with flatteries to seek his aid, instead of curing him he was accustomed to give him something that would secretly injure him, thinking it somewhat nobler to threaten than to wheedle for benefits. When the soldiers of Erik menaced his house, in their desire to take Halfdan, he so robbed them of the power of sight that they could neither perceive the house nor trace it with certainty, though it was close to them. So utterly had their eyesight been dulled by a decisive mist.

When Halfdan had by this man's help regained his full strength, he summoned Thore, a champion of notable capacity, and proclaimed war against Erik. But when the forces were led out on the other side, and he saw that Erik was superior in numbers, he hid a part of his army, and instructed it to lie in ambush among the bushes by the wayside, in order to destroy the enemy by an ambuscade as he marched through the narrow part of the path. Erik foresaw this, having reconnoitred his means of advancing, and thought he must withdraw for fear, if he advanced along the track he had intended, of being hard-pressed by the tricks of the enemy among the steep windings of the hills. They therefore joined battle, force against force, in a deep valley, inclosed all round by lofty mountain ridges. Here Halfdan, when he saw the line of his men wavering, climbed with Thore up a crag covered with stones and, uprooting boulders, rolled them down upon the enemy below; and the weight of these as they fell crushed the line that was drawn up in the lower position. Thus he regained with stones the victory which he had lost with arms. For this deed of prowess he received the name of Biargramm (*rock strong*), a word which seems to have been compounded from the name of his fierceness and of the mountains. He soon gained so much esteem for this among the Swedes that he was thought to be the son of the great Thor, and the people bestowed divine honours upon him, and judged him worthy of public libation.

But the souls of the conquered find it hard to rest, and the insolence of the beaten ever struggles towards the forbidden thing. So it came to pass that Erik, in his desire to repair the losses incurred in flight, attacked the districts subject to Halfdan. Even Denmark he did not exempt from this harsh treatment; for he thought it a most worthy deed to assail the country of the man who had caused him to be driven from his own. And so, being more anxious to inflict injury than to repel it, he set Sweden free from the arms of the enemy. When Halfdan heard that his brother Harald had been beaten by Erik in three battles, and slain in the fourth, he was afraid of losing his empire; he had to quit the land of the Swedes and go back to his own country. Thus Erik regained the kingdom of Sweden all the more quickly, that he quitted it so lightly. Had fortune wished to favour him in keeping his kingdom as much as she had in regaining it, she would in nowise have given him into the hand of Halfdan. This capture was made in the following way: When Halfdan had gone back into Sweden, he hid his fleet craftily, and went to meet Erik with two vessels. Erik attacked him with ten; and Halfdan, sailing through sundry winding channels, stole back to his concealed forces. Erik pursued him too far, and the Danish fleet came out on the sea. Thus Erik was surrounded; but he rejected the life, which was offered him under condition of thraldom. He could not bear to think more of the light of day than liberty, and chose to die rather than serve; lest he should seem to love life so well as to turn from a slave into a freeman; and that he might not court with new-born obeisance the man whom fortune had just before made only his equal. So little knows virtue how to buy life with dishonour. Wherefore he was put in chains, and banished to a place haunted by wild beasts; an end unworthy of that lofty spirit.

Halfdan had thus become sovereign of both kingdoms, and graced his fame with a triple degree of honour. For he was skillful and eloquent in composing poems in the fashion of his country; and he was no less notable as a valorous champion than as a powerful king. But when he heard that two active rovers, Toke and Anund, were threatening the surrounding districts, he attacked and routed them in a sea-fight. For the ancients thought that nothing was more desirable than glory which was gained, not by brilliancy of wealth, but by address in arms. Accordingly, the most famous men of old were so minded as to love seditions, to renew quarrels, to loathe ease, to prefer fighting to peace, to be rated by their valour and not by their wealth, to find their greatest delight in battles, and their least in banquetings.

But Halfdan was not long to seek for a rival. A certain Siwald, of most illustrious birth, related with lamentation in the assembly of the Swedes the death of Frode and his queen; and inspired in almost all of them such a hatred of Halfdan, that the vote of the majority granted him permission to revolt. Nor was he content with the mere goodwill of their voices, but so won the heart of the commons by his crafty canvassing that he induced almost all of them to set with their hands the royal emblem on his head. Siwald had seven sons, who were such clever sorcerers that often, inspired with the force of sudden frenzy, they would roar savagely, bite their shields, swallow hot coals, and go through any fire that could be piled up; and their frantic passion could only be checked by the rigour of chains, or propitiated by slaughter of men. With such a frenzy did their own sanguinary temper, or else the fury of demons, inspire them.

When Halfdan had heard of these things while busy roving, he said it was right that his soldiers, who had hitherto spent their rage upon foreigners, should now smite with the steel the flesh of their own countrymen, and that they who had been used to labour to extend their realm should now avenge its wrongful seizure. On Halfdan approaching, Siwald sent him ambassadors and requested him, if he was as great in act as in renown, to meet himself and his sons in single combat, and save the general peril by his own. When the other answered, that a combat could not lawfully be fought by more than two men, Siwald said, that it was no wonder that a childless bachelor should refuse the proffered conflict, since his nature was void of heat, and had struck a disgraceful frost into his soul and body Children, he added, were not different from the man who begot them, since they drew from him their common principle of birth. Thus he and his sons were to be accounted as one person, for nature seemed in a manner to have bestowed on them a single body. Halfdan, stung with this shameful affront, accepted the challenge; meaning to wipe out with noble deeds of valour such an insulting taunt upon his celibacy, And while he chanced to be walking through a shady woodland, he plucked up by the roots an oak that stuck in his path, and, by simply stripping it of its branches, made it look like a stout club. Having this trusty weapon, he composed a short song as follows:

"Behold! the rough burden which I bear with straining crest, shall unto crests bring wounds and destruction. Never shall any weapon of leafy wood crush the Goths with direr augury. It shall shatter the towering strength of the knotty neck, and shall bruise the hollow temples with the mass of timber. The club which shall quell the wild madness of the land shall be no less fatal to the Swedes. Breaking bones, and brandished about the mangled limbs of warriors, the stock I have wrenched off shall crush the backs of the wicked, crush the hearths of our kindred, shed the blood of our countrymen, and be a destructive pest upon our land."

When he had said this, he attacked Siwald and his seven sons, and destroyed them, their force and bravery being useless against the enormous mass of his club.

At this time one Hardbeen, who came from Helsingland, gloried in kidnapping and ravishing princesses, and used to kill any man who hindered him in his lusts. He preferred high matches to those that were lowly; and the more illustrious the victims he could violate, the more noble he thought himself. No man escaped unpunished who durst measure himself with Hardbeen in valour. He was so huge, that his stature reached the measure of nine ells. He had twelve champions dwelling with him, whose business it was to rise up and to restrain his fury with the aid of bonds, whenever the rage came on him that foreboded of battle. These men asked Halfden to attack Hardbeen and his champions man by man; and he not only promised to fight, but assured himself the victory with most confident words. When Hardbeen heard this, a demoniacal frenzy suddenly took him; he furiously bit and devoured the edges of his shield; he kept gulping down fiery coals; he snatched live embers in his mouth and let them pass down into his entrails; he rushed through the perils of crackling fires; and at last, when he had raved through every sort of madness, he turned his sword with raging hand against the hearts of six of his champions. It is doubtful whether this madness came from thirst for battle or natural ferocity. Then with the remaining band of his champions he attacked Halfdan, who crushed him with a hammer of wondrous size, so that he lost both victory and life; paying the penalty both to Halfdan, whom he had challenged, and to the kings whose offspring he had violently ravished.

Fortune never seemed satisfied with the trying of Halfdan's strength, and used to offer him unexpected occasions for fighting. It so happened that Egther, a Finlander, was harrying the Swedes on a roving raid. Halfdan, having found that he had three ships, attacked him with the same number. Night closed the battle, so that he could not conquer him; but he challenged Egther next day, fought with and overthrew him. He next heard that Grim, a champion of immense strength, was suing, under threats of a duel, for Thorhild, the daughter of the chief Hather, and that her father had proclaimed that he who put the champion out of the way should have her. Halfdan, though he had reached old age a bachelor, was stirred by the promise of the chief as much as by the insolence of the champion, and went to Norway. When he entered it, he blotted out every mark by which he could be recognized, disguising his face with splashes of dirt; and when he came to the spot of the battle, drew his sword first. And when he knew that it had been blunted by the glance of the enemy, he cast it on the ground, drew another from the sheath, with which he attacked Grim, cutting through the meshes on the edge of his cuirass, as well as the lower part of his shield. Grim wondered at the deed, and said, "I cannot remember an old man who fought more keenly;" and, instantly drawing his sword, he pierced through and shattered the target that was opposed to his blade. But as his right arm tarried on the stroke, Halfdan, without wavering, met and smote it swiftly with his sword. The other, notwithstanding, clasped his sword with his left hand, and cut through the thigh of the striker, revenging the mangling of his own body with a slight wound. Halfdan, now conqueror, allowed the conquered man to ransom the remnant of his life with a sum of money; he would not be thought shamefully to rob a maimed man, who could not fight, of the pitiful remainder of his days. By this deed he showed himself almost as great in saving as in conquering his enemy. As a prize for this victory he won Thorhild in marriage, and had by her a son

Asmund, from whom the kings of Norway treasure the honour of being descended; retracing the regular succession of their line down from Halfdan.

After this, Ebbe, a rover of common birth, was so confident of his valour, that he was moved to aspire to a splendid marriage. He was a suitor for Sigrid, the daughter of Yngwin, King of the Goths, and moreover demanded half the Gothic kingdom for her dowry. Halfdan was consulted whether the match should be entertained, and advised that a feigned consent should be given, promising that he would baulk the marriage. He also gave instructions that a seat should be allotted to himself among the places of the guests at table, Yngwin approved the advice; and Halfdan, utterly defacing the dignity of his royal presence with an unsightly and alien disguise, and coming by night on the wedding feast, alarmed those who met him; for they marvelled at the coming of a man of such superhuman stature.

When Halfdan entered the palace, he looked round on all and asked, who was he that had taken the place next to the king? Upon Ebbe replying that the future son-in-law of the king was next to his side, Halfdan asked him, in the most passionate language, what madness, or what demons, had brought him to such wantonness, as to make bold to unite his contemptible and filthy race with a splendid and illustrious line, or to dare to lay his peasant finger upon the royal family: and, not content even with such a claim, to aspire, as it seemed, to a share even in the kingdom of another. Then he bade Ebbe fight him, saying that he must get the victory before he got his wish. The other answered that the night was the time to fight with monsters, but the day the time with men; but Halfdan, to prevent him shirking the battle by pleading the hour, declared that the moon was shining with the brightness of daylight. Thus he forced Ebbe to fight, and felled him, turning the banquet into a spectacle, and the wedding into a funeral.

Some years passed, and Halfdan went back to his own country, and being childless he bequeathed the royal wealth by will to Yngwin, and appointed him king. YNGWIN was afterwards overthrown in war by a rival named Ragnald, and he left a son SIWALD.

Siwald's daughter, Sigrid, was of such excellent modesty, that though a great concourse of suitors wooed her for her beauty, it seemed as if she could not be brought to look at one of them. Confident in this power of self-restraint, she asked her father for a husband who by the sweetness of his blandishments should be able to get a look back from her. For in old time among us the self-restraint of the maidens was a great subduer of wanton looks, lest the soundness of the soul should be infected by the licence of the eyes; and women desired to avouch the purity of their hearts by the modesty of their faces. Then one Ottar, the son of Ebb, kindled with confidence in the greatness either of his own achievements, or of his courtesy and eloquent address, stubbornly and ardently desired to woo the maiden. And though he strove with all the force of his wit to soften her gaze, no device whatever could move her downcast eyes; and, marvelling at her persistence in her indomitable rigour, he departed.

A giant desired the same thing, but, finding himself equally foiled, he suborned a woman; and she, pretending friendship for the girl, served her for a while as her handmaid, and at last enticed her far from her father's house, by cunningly going out of the way; then the giant rushed upon her and bore her off into the closest fastnesses of a ledge on the mountain. Others think that he disguised himself as a woman, treacherously continued his devices so as to draw the girl away from her own house, and in the end carried her off. When Ottar heard of this, he ransacked the recesses of the mountain in search of the maiden, found her, slew the giant, and bore her off. But the assiduous giant had bound back the locks of the maiden, tightly twisting her hair in such a way that the matted mass of tresses was held in a kind of curled bundle; nor was it easy for anyone to unravel their plaited tangle, without using the steel. Again, he tried with divers allurements to provoke the maiden to look at him; and when he had long laid vain siege to her listless eyes, he abandoned his quest, since his purpose turned out so little to his liking. But he could not bring himself to violate the girl, loth to defile with ignoble intercourse one of illustrious birth. She then wandered long, and sped through divers desert and circuitous paths, and happened to come to the hut of a certain huge woman of the woods, who set her to the task of pasturing her goats. Again Ottar granted her his aid to set her free, and again he tried to move her, addressing her in this fashion:

"Wouldst thou rather hearken to my counsels, and embrace me even as I desire, than be here and tend the flock of rank goats?

"Spurn the hand of thy wicked mistress, and flee hastily from thy cruel taskmistress, that thou mayst go back with me to the ships of thy friends and live in freedom.

"Quit the care of the sheep entrusted to thee; scorn to drive the steps of the goats; share my bed, and fitly reward my prayers.

"O thou whom I have sought with such pains, turn again thy listless beams; for a little while—it is an easy gesture—lift thy modest face.

"I will take thee hence, and set thee by the house of thy father, and unite thee joyfully with thy loving mother, if but once thou wilt show me thine eyes stirred with soft desires.

"Thou, whom I have borne so oft from the prisons of the giants, pay thou some due favour to my toil of old; pity my hard endeavours, and be stern no more.

"For why art thou become so distraught and brainsick, that thou wilt choose to tend the flock of another, and be counted among the servants of monsters, sooner than encourage our marriage-troth with fitting and equal consent?"

But she, that she might not suffer the constancy of her chaste mind to falter by looking at the world without, restrained her gaze, keeping her lids immovably rigid. How modest, then, must we think, were the women of that age, when, under the strongest provocations of their lovers, they could not be brought to make the slightest motion of their eyes! So when Ottar found that even by the merits of his double service he could not stir the maiden's gaze towards him, he went back to the fleet, wearied out with shame and chagrin. Sigrid, in her old fashion, ran far away over the rocks, and chanced to stray in her wanderings to the abode of Ebb; where, ashamed of her nakedness and distress, she pretended to be a daughter of paupers. The mother of Ottar saw that this woman, though bestained and faded, and covered with a meagre cloak, was the scion of some noble stock; and took her, and with honourable courtesy kept her by her side in a distinguished seat. For the beauty of the maiden was a sign that betrayed her birth, and her telltale features echoed her lineage. Ottar saw her, and asked why she hid her face in her robe. Also, in order to test her mind more surely, he feigned that a woman was about to become his wife, and, as he went up into the bride-bed, gave Sigrid the torch to hold. The lights had almost burnt down, and she was hard put to it by the flame coming closer; but she showed such an example of endurance that she was seen to hold her hand motionless, and might have been thought to feel no annoyance from the heat. For the fire within mastered the fire without, and the glow of her longing soul deadened the burn of her scorched skin. At last Ottar bade her look to her hand. Then, modestly lifting her eyes, she turned her calm gaze upon him; and straightway, the pretended marriage being put away, went up unto the bride-bed to be his wife. Siwald afterwards seized Ottar, and thought that he ought to be hanged for defiling his daughter.

But Sigrid at once explained how she had happened to be carried away, and not only brought Ottar back into the king's favour, but also induced her father himself to marry Ottar's sister.

After this a battle was fought between Siwald and Ragnald in Zealand, warriors of picked valour being chosen on both sides. For three days they slaughtered one another; but so great was the bravery of both sides, that it was doubtful how the victory would go. Then Ottar, whether seized with weariness at the prolonged battle, or with desire of glory, broke, despising death, through the thickest of the foe, cut down Ragnald among the bravest of his soldiers, and won the Danes a sudden victory. This battle was notable for the cowardice of the greatest nobles. For the whole mass fell into such a panic, that forty of the bravest of the Swedes are said to have turned and fled. The chief of these, Starkad, had been used to tremble at no fortune, however cruel, and no danger, however great. But some strange terror stole upon him, and he chose to follow the flight of his friends rather than to despise it. I should think that he was filled with this alarm by the power of heaven, that he might not think himself courageous beyond the measure of human valour. Thus the prosperity of mankind is wont ever to be incomplete. Then all these warriors embraced the service of King Hakon, the mightiest of the rovers, like remnants of the war drifting to him.

After this Siwald was succeeded by his son SIGAR, who had sons Siwald, Alf, and Alger, and a daughter Signe. Alf excelled the rest in spirit and beauty, and devoted himself to the business of a rover. Such a grace was shed on his hair, which had a wonderful dazzling glow, that his locks seemed to shine silvery. At the same time Siward, the king of the Goths, is said to have had two sons, Wemund and Osten, and a daughter Alfhild, who showed almost from her cradle such faithfulness to modesty that she continually kept her face muffled in her robe, lest she should cause her beauty to provoke the passion of another. Her father banished her into very close keeping, and gave her a viper and a snake to rear, wishing to defend her chastity by the protection of these reptiles when they came to grow up. For it would have been hard to pry into her chamber when it was barred by so dangerous a bolt. He also enacted that if any man tried to enter it, and failed, he must straightway yield his head to be taken off and impaled on a stake. The terror which was thus attached to wantonness chastened the heated spirits of the young men.

Alf, the son of Sigar, thinking that peril of the attempt only made it nobler, declared himself a wooer, and went to subdue the beasts that kept watch beside the room of the maiden; inasmuch as, according to the decree, the embraces of the maiden were the prize of their subduer. Alf covered his body with a blood-stained hide in order to make them more frantic against him. Girt with this, as soon as he had entered the doors of the enclosure, he took a piece of red-hot steel in the tongs, and plunged it into the yawning throat of the viper, which he laid dead. Then he flung his spear full into the gaping mouth of the snake as it wound and writhed forward, and destroyed it.

And when he demanded the gage which was attached to victory by the terms of the covenant, Siward answered that he would accept that man only for his daughter's husband of whom she made a free and decided choice. None but the girl's mother was stiff against the wooer's suit; and she privately spoke to her daughter in order to search her mind. The daughter warmly praised her suitor for his valour; whereon the mother upbraided her sharply, that her chastity should be unstrung, and she be captivated by charming looks; and because, forgetting to judge his virtue, she cast the gaze of a wanton mind upon the flattering lures of beauty. Thus Alfhild was led to despise the young Dane; whereupon she exchanged woman's for man's attire, and, no longer the most modest of maidens, began the life of a warlike rover.

Enrolling in her service many maidens who were of the same mind, she happened to come to a spot where a band of rovers were lamenting the death of their captain, who had been lost in war; they made her their rover-captain for her beauty, and she did deeds beyond the valour of woman. Alf made many toilsome voyages in pursuit of her, and in winter happened to come on a fleet of the Blacmen. The waters were at this time frozen hard, and the ships were caught in such a mass of ice that they could not get on by the most violent rowing. But the continued frost promised the prisoners a safer way of advance; and Alf ordered his men to try the frozen surface of the sea in their brogues, after they had taken off their slippery shoes, so that they could run over the level ice more steadily. The Blacmen supposed that they were taking to flight with all the nimbleness of their heels, and began to fight them, but their steps tottered exceedingly and they gave back, the slippery surface under their soles making their footing uncertain. But the Danes crossed the frozen sea with safer steps, and foiled the feeble advance of the enemy, whom they conquered, and then turned and sailed to Finland. Here they chanced to enter a rather narrow gulf, and, on sending a few men to reconnoitre, they learnt that the harbour was being held by a few ships. For Alfhild had gone before them with her fleet into the same narrows. And when she saw the strange ships afar off, she rowed in swift haste forward to encounter them, thinking it better to attack the foe than to await them. Alf's men were against attacking so many ships with so few; but he replied that it would be shameful if anyone should report to Alfhild that his desire to advance could be checked by a few ships in the path; for he said that their record of honours ought not to be tarnished by such a trifle.

The Danes wondered whence their enemies got such grace of bodily beauty and such supple limbs. So, when they began the sea-fight, the young man Alf leapt on Alfhild's prow, and advanced towards the stern, slaughtering all that withstood him. His comrade Borgar struck off Alfhild's helmet, and, seeing the smoothness of her chin, saw that he must fight with kisses and not with arms; that the cruel spears must be put away, and the enemy handled with gentler dealings. So Alf rejoiced that the woman whom he had sought over land and sea in the face of so many dangers was now beyond all expectation in his power; whereupon he took hold of her eagerly, and made her change her man's apparel for a woman's; and afterwards begot on her a daughter, Gurid. Also Borgar wedded the attendant of Alfhild, Groa, and had by her a son, Harald, to whom the following age gave the surname Hyldetand.

And that no one may wonder that this sex laboured at warfare, I will make a brief digression, in order to give a short account of the estate and character of such women. There were once women among the Danes who dressed themselves to look like men, and devoted almost every instant of their lives to the pursuit of war, that they might not suffer their valour to be unstrung or dulled by the infection of luxury. For they abhorred all dainty living, and used to harden their minds and bodies with toil and endurance. They put away all the softness and lightmindedness of women, and inured their womanish spirit to masculine ruthlessness. They sought, moreover, so zealously to be skilled in warfare, that they might have been thought to have unsexed themselves. Those especially, who had either force of character or tall and comely persons, used to enter on this kind of life. These women, therefore (just as if they had forgotten their natural estate, and preferred sternness to soft words), offered war rather than kisses, and would rather taste blood than busses, and went about the business of arms more than that of amours. They devoted those hands to the lance which they should rather have applied to the loom. They assailed men with their spears whom they could have melted with their looks, they thought of death and not of dalliance. Now I will cease to wander, and will go back to my theme.

In the early spring, Alf and Alger, who had gone back to sea-roving, were exploring the sea in various directions, when they lighted with a hundred ships upon Helwin, Hagbard, and Hamund, sons of the kinglet Hamund. These they attacked and only the twilight stayed their blood-wearied hands; and in the night the soldiers were ordered to keep truce. On the morrow this was ratified for good by a mutual oath; for such loss had been suffered on both sides in the battle of the day before that they had no force left to fight again. Thus, exhausted by equality of valour, they were driven perforce to make peace. About the same time Hildigisl, a Teuton of noble birth, relying on his looks and his rank, sued for Signe, the daughter of Sigar. But she scorned him, chiefly for his insignificance, inasmuch as he was not brave, but wished to adorn his fortunes with the courage of other people. But this woman was inclined to love Hakon, chiefly for the high renown of his great deeds. For she thought more of the brave than the feeble; she admired notable deeds more than looks, knowing that every allurement of beauty is mere dross when reckoned against simple valour, and cannot weigh equal with it in the balance. For there are maids that are more charmed by the fame than by the face of their lovers; who go not by the looks, but by the mind, and whom naught but regard for a man's spirit can kindle to pledge their own troth. Now Hagbard, going to Denmark with the sons of Sigar, gained speech of their sister without their knowledge, and in the end induced her to pledge her word to him that she would secretly become his mistress. Afterwards, when the waiting-women happened to be comparing the honourable deeds of the nobles, she preferred Hakon to Hildigisl, declaring that the latter had nothing to praise but his looks, while in the case of the other a wrinkled visage was outweighed by a choice spirit. Not content with this plain kind of praise, she is said to have sung as follows:

"This man lacks fairness, but shines with foremost courage, measuring his features by his force.

"For the lofty soul redeems the shortcoming of harsh looks, and conquers the body's blemish.

"His look flashes with spirit, his face, notable in its very harshness, delights in fierceness.

"He who strictly judges character praises not the mind for the fair hue, but rather the complexion for the mind.

"This man is not prized for beauty, but for brave daring and war-won honour.

"While the other is commended by his comely head and radiant countenance and crest of lustrous locks.

"Vile is the empty grace of beauty, self-confounded the deceptive pride of comeliness.

"Valour and looks are swayed by different inclinations: one lasts on, the other perishes.

"Empty red and white brings in vice, and is frittered away little by little by the lightly gliding years;

"But courage plants firmer the hearts devoted to it, and does not slip and straightway fall.

"The voice of the multitude is beguiled by outward good, and forsakes the rule of right;

"But I praise virtue at a higher rate, and scorn the grace of comeliness."

This utterance fell on the ears of the bystanders in such a way, that they thought she praised Hagbard under the name of Hakon. And Hildigisl, vexed that she preferred Hagbard to himself, bribed a certain blind man, Bolwis, to bring the sons of Sigar and the sons of Hamund to turn their friendship into hatred. For King Sigar had been used to transact almost all affairs by the advice of two old men, one of whom was Bolwis. The temper of these two men was so different, that one used to reconcile folk who were at feud, while the other loved to sunder in hatred those who were bound by friendship, and by estranging folk to fan pestilent quarrels.

So Bolwis began by reviling the sons of Hamund to the sons of Sigar, in lying slanders, declaring that they never used to preserve the bonds of fellowship loyally, and that they must be restrained by war rather than by league. Thus the alliance of the young men was broken through; and while Hagbard was far away, the sons of Sigar, Alf and Alger, made an attack, and Helwin and Hamund were destroyed by the harbour which is called Hamund's Bay. Hagbard then came up with fresh forces to avenge his brothers, and destroyed them in battle. Hildigisl slunk off with a spear through both buttocks, which was the occasion for a jeer at the Teutons, since the ugliness of the blow did not fail to brand it with disgrace.

Afterwards Hagbard dressed himself in woman's attire, and, as though he had not wronged Sigar's daughter by slaying her brothers, went back to her alone, trusting in the promise he had from her, and feeling more safe in her loyalty than alarmed by reason of his own misdeed. Thus does lust despise peril. And, not to lack a pretext for his journey, he gave himself out as a fighting-maid of Hakon, saying that he took an embassy from him to Sigar. And when he was taken to bed at night among the handmaids, and the woman who washed his feet were wiping them, they asked him why he had such hairy legs, and why his hands were not at all soft to touch, he answered:

"What wonder that the soft hollow of my foot should harden, and that long hairs should stay on my shaggy leg, when the sand has so often smitten my soles beneath, and the briars have caught me in mid-step?

"Now I scour the forest with leaping, now the waters with running. Now the sea, now the earth, now the wave is my path.

"Nor could my breast, shut in bonds of steel, and wont to be beaten with lance and missile, ever have been soft to the touch, as with you who are covered by the mantle or the smooth gown.

"Not the distaff or the wool-frails, but spears dripping from the slaughter, have served for our handling."

Signe did not hesitate to back up his words with like dissembling, and replied that it was natural that hands which dealt more in wounds than wools, and in battle than in tasks of the house should show the hardness that befitted their service; and that, unenfeebled with the pliable softness of women, they should not feel smooth to the touch of others. For they were hardened partly by the toils of war, partly by the habit of seafaring. For, said she, the warlike handmaid of Hakon did not deal in woman's business, but had been wont to bring her right hand blood-stained with hurling spears and flinging missiles. It was no wonder, therefore, if her soles were hardened by the immense journeys she had gone; and that, when the shores she had scoured so often had bruised them with their rough and broken shingle, they should toughen in a horny stiffness, and should not feel soft to the touch like theirs, whose steps never strayed, but who were forever cooped within the confines of the palace. Hagbard received her as his bedfellow, under plea that he was to have the couch of honour; and, amid their converse of mutual delight, he addressed her slowly in such words as these:

"If thy father takes me and gives me to bitter death, wilt thou ever, when I am dead, forget so strong a troth, and again seek the marriage-plight?

"For if the chance should fall that way, I can hope for no room for pardon; nor will the father who is to avenge his sons spare or have pity.

"For I stripped thy brothers of their power on the sea and slew them; and now, unknown to thy father, as though I had done naught before counter to his will, I hold thee in the couch we share.

"Say, then, my one love, what manner of wish wilt thou show when thou lackest the accustomed embrace?"

Signe answered:

"Trust me, dear; I wish to die with thee, if fate brings thy turn to perish first, and not to prolong my span of life at all, when once dismal death has cast thee to the tomb.

"For if thou chance to close thy eyes for ever, a victim to the maddened attack of the men-at-arms;—by whatsoever doom thy breath be cut off, by sword or disease, by sea or soil, I forswear every wanton and corrupt flame, and vow myself to a death like thine; that they who were bound by one marriage-union may be embraced in one and the same punishment. Nor will I quit this man, though I am to feel the pains of death; I have resolved he is worthy of my love who gathered the first kisses of my mouth, and had the first fruits of my delicate youth. I think that no vow will be surer than this, if speech of woman have any loyalty at all."

This speech so quickened the spirit of Hagbard, that he found more pleasure in her promise than peril in his own going away (to his death). The serving-women betrayed him; and when Sigar's men-at-arms attacked him, he defended himself long and stubbornly, and slew many of them in the doorway. But at last he was taken, and brought before the assembly, and found the voices of the people divided over him. For very many said that he should be punished for so great an offence; but Bilwis, the brother of Bolwis, and others, conceived a better judgment, and advised that it would be better to use his stout service than to deal with him too ruthlessly.

Then Bolwis came forward and declared that it was evil advice which urged the king to pardon when he ought to take vengeance, and to soften with unworthy compassion his righteous impulse to anger. For how could Sigar, in the case of this man, feel any desire to spare or pity him, when he had not only robbed him of the double comfort of his sons, but had also bestained him with the insult of deflowering his daughter? The greater part of the assembly voted for this opinion; Hagbard was condemned, and a gallows-tree planted to receive him. Hence it came about that he who at first had hardly one sinister voice against him was punished with general harshness. Soon after the queen handed him a cup, and, bidding him assuage his thirst, vexed him with threats after this manner:

"Now, insolent Hagbard, whom the whole assembly has pronounced worthy of death, now to quench thy thirst thou shalt give thy lips liquor to drink in a cup of horn.

"Wherefore cast away fear, and, at this last hour of thy life, taste with bold lips the deadly goblet;

"That, having drunk it, thou mayst presently land by the dwellings of those below, passing into the sequestered palace of stern Dis, giving thy body to the gibbet and thy spirit to Orcus."

Then the young man took the cup offered him, and is said to have made answer as follows:

"With this hand, wherewith I cut off thy twin sons, I will take my last taste, yea the draught of the last drink.

"Now not unavenged shall I go to the Elysian regions, not unchastising to the stern ghosts. For these men have first been shut in the dens of Tartarus by a slaughter wrought by my endeavours. This right hand was wet with blood that was yours, this hand robbed thy children of the years of their youth, children whom thy womb brought to light; but the deadly sword spared it not then. Infamous woman, raving in spirit, hapless, childless mother, no years shall restore to thee the lost, no time and no day whatsoever shall save thy child from the starkness of death, or redeem him!"

Thus he avenged the queen's threats of death by taunting her with the youths whom he had slain; and, flinging back the cup at her, drenched her face with the sprinkled wine.

Meantime Signe asked her weeping women whether they could endure to bear her company in the things which she purposed. They promised that they would carry out and perform themselves whatsoever their mistress should come to wish, and their promise was loyally kept. Then, drowned in tears, she said that she wished to follow in death the only partner of her bed that she had ever had; and ordered that, as soon as the signal had been given from a place of watch, torches should be put to the room, then that halters should be made out of their robes; and to these they should proffer their throats to be strangled, thrusting away the support to the feet. They agreed, and that they might blench the less at death, she gave them a draught of wine. After this Hagbard was led to the hill, which afterwards took its name from him, to be hanged. Then, to test the loyalty of his true love, he told the executioners to hang up his mantle, saying that it would be a pleasure to him if he could see the likeness of his approaching death rehearsed in some way. The request was granted; and the watcher on the outlook, thinking that the thing was being done to Hagbard, reported what she saw to the maidens who were shut within the palace. They quickly fired the house, and thrusting away the wooden support under their feet, gave their necks to the noose to be writhen. So Hagbard, when he saw the palace wrapped in fire, and the familiar chamber blazing, said that he felt more joy from the loyalty of his mistress than sorrow at his approaching death. He also charged the bystanders to do him to death, witnessing how little he made of his doom by a song like this:

"Swiftly, O warriors! let me be caught and lifted into the air. Sweet, O my bride! is it for me to die when thou hast gone.

"I perceive the crackling and the house ruddy with flames; and the love, long-promised, declares our troth.

"Behold, thy covenant is fulfilled with no doubtful vows, since thou sharest my life and my destruction.

"We shall have one end, one bond after our troth, and somewhere our first love will live on.

"Happy am I, that have deserved to have joy of such a consort, and not to go basely alone to the gods of Tartarus!

"Then let the knot gripe the midst of the throat; nought but pleasure the last doom shall bring,

"Since there remains a sure hope of the renewal of love, and a death which will soon have joys of its own.

"Either country is sweet; in both worlds shall be held in honour the repose of our souls together, our equal truth in love,

"For, see now, I welcome the doom before me; since not even among the shades does very love suffer the embrace of its partner to perish." And as he spoke the executioners strangled him. And, that none may think that all traces of antiquity have utterly disappeared, a proof of the aforesaid event is afforded by local marks yet existing; for the killing of Hagbard gave his name to the stead; and not far from the town of Sigar there is a place to be seen, where a mound a little above the level, with the appearance of a swelling in the ground, looks like an ancient homestead. Moreover, a man told Absalon that he had seen a beam found in the spot, which a countryman struck with his ploughshare as he burrowed into the clods.

Hakon, the son of Hamund, heard of this; but when he was seen to be on the point of turning his arms from the Irish against the Danes in order to avenge his brother, Hakon the Zealander, the son of Wigar, and Starkad deserted him. They had been his allies from the death of Ragnald up to that hour: one, because he was moved by regard for friendship, the other by regard for his birth; so that different reasons made both desire the same thing.

Now patriotism diverted Hakon (of Zealand) from attacking his country; for it was apparent that he was going to fight his own people, while all the rest warred with foreigners. But Starkad forbore to become the foe of the aged Sigar, whose hospitality he had enjoyed, lest he should be thought to wrong one who deserved well of him. For some men pay such respect to hospitality that, if they can remember ever to have experienced kindly offices from folk, they cannot be thought to inflict any annoyance on them. But Hakon thought the death of his brother a worse loss than the defection of his champions; and, gathering his fleet into the haven called Herwig in Danish, and in Latin Hosts' Bight, he drew up his men, and posted his line of footsoldiers in the spot where the town built by Esbern now defends with its fortifications those who dwell hard by, and repels the approach of barbarous savages. Then he divided his forces in three, and sent on two-thirds of his ships, appointing a few men to row to the river Susa. This force was to advance on a dangerous voyage along its winding reaches, and to help those on foot if necessary. He marched in person by land with the remainder, advancing chiefly over wooded country to escape notice. Part of this path, which was once closed up with thick woods, is now land ready for the plough, and fringed with a scanty scrub. And, in order that when they got out into the plain they might not lack the shelter of trees, he told them to cut and carry branches. Also, that nothing might burden their rapid march, he bade them cast away some of their clothes, as well as their scabbards, and carry their swords naked. In memory of this event he left the mountain and the ford a perpetual name. Thus by his night march he eluded two pickets of sentries; but when he came upon the third, a scout, observing the marvellous event, went to the sleeping-room of Sigar, saying that he brought news of a portentous thing; for he saw leaves and shrubs like men walking. Then the king asked him how far off was the advancing forest; and when he heard that it was near, he added that this prodigy boded his own death. Hence the marsh where the shrubs were cut down was styled in common parlance Deadly Marsh. Therefore, fearing the narrow passages, he left the town, and went to a level spot which was more open, there to meet the enemy in battle. Sigar fought unsuccessfully, and was crushed and slain at the spot that is called in common speech Walbrunna, but in Latin the Spring of Corpses or Carnage. Then Hakon used his conquest to cruel purpose, and followed up his good fortune so wickedly, that he lusted for an indiscriminate massacre, and thought no forbearance should be shown to rank or sex. Nor did he yield to any regard for compassion or shame, but stained his sword in the blood of women, and attacked mothers and children in one general and ruthless slaughter.

SIWALD, the son of Sigar, had thus far stayed under his father's roof. But when he heard of this, he mustered an army in order to have his vengeance. So Hakon, alarmed at the gathering of such numbers, went back with a third of his army to his fleet at Herwig, and planned to depart by sea. But his colleague, Hakon, surnamed the Proud, thought that he ought himself to feel more confidence at the late victory than fear at the absence of Hakon; and, preferring death to flight, tried to defend the remainder of the army. So he drew back his camp for a little, and for a long time waited near the town of

Axelsted, for the arrival of the fleet, blaming his friends for their tardy coming. For the fleet that had been sent into the river had not yet come to anchor in the appointed harbour. Now the killing of Sigar and the love of Siwald were stirring the temper of the people one and all, so that both sexes devoted themselves to war, and you would have thought that the battle did not lack the aid of women.

On the morrow Hakon and Siwald met in an encounter and fought two whole days. The combat was most frightful; both generals fell; and victory graced the remnants of the Danes. But, in the night after the battle, the fleet, having penetrated the Susa, reached the appointed haven. It was once possible to row along this river; but its bed is now choked with solid substances, and is so narrowed by its straits that few vessels can get in, being prevented by its sluggishness and contractedness. At daybreak, when the sailors saw the corpses of their friends, they heaped up, in order to bury the general, a barrow of notable size, which is famous to this day, and is commonly named Hakon's Howe.

But Borgar, with Skanian chivalry suddenly came up and slaughtered a multitude of them. When the enemy were destroyed, he manned their ships, which now lacked their rowers, and hastily, with breathless speed, pursued the son of Hamund. He encountered him, and ill-fortune befell Hakon, who fled in hasty panic with three ships to the country of the Scots, where, after two years had gone by, he died.

All these perilous wars and fortunes had so exhausted the royal line among the Danes, that it was found to be reduced to GURID alone, the daughter of Alf, and granddaughter of Sigar. And when the Danes saw themselves deprived of their usual high-born sovereigns, they committed the kingdom to men of the people, and appointed rulers out of the commons, assigning to Ostmar the regency of Skaane, and that of Zealand to Hunding; on Hane they conferred the lordship of Funen; while in the hands of Rorik and Hather they put the supreme power of Jutland, the authority being divided. Therefore, that it may not be unknown from what father sprang the succeeding line of kings, some matters come to my mind which must be glanced at for a while in a needful digression.

They say that Gunnar, the bravest of the Swedes, was once at feud with Norway for the most weighty reasons, and that he was granted liberty to attack it, but that he turned this liberty into licence by the greatest perils, and fell, in the first of the raids he planned, upon the district of Jather, which he put partly to the sword and partly to the flames. Forbearing to plunder, he rejoiced only in passing through the paths that were covered with corpses, and the blood-stained ways. Other men used to abstain from bloodshed, and love pillage more than slaughter; but he preferred bloodthirstiness to booty, and liked best to wreak his deadly pleasure by slaughtering men, His cruelty drove the islanders to forestall the impending danger by a public submission. Moreover, Ragnald, the King of the Northmen, now in extreme age, when he heard how the tyrant busied himself, had a cave made and shut up in it his daughter Drota, giving her due attendance, and providing her maintenance for a long time. Also he committed to the cave some swords which had been adorned with the choicest smithcraft, besides the royal household gear; so that he might not leave the enemy to capture and use the sword, which he saw that he could not wield himself. And, to prevent the cave being noticed by its height, he levelled the hump down to the firmer ground. Then he set out to war; but being unable with his aged limbs to go down into battle, he leaned on the shoulders of his escort and walked forth propped by the steps of others. So he perished in the battle, where he fought with more ardour than success, and left his country a sore matter for shame.

For Gunnar, in order to punish the cowardice of the conquered race by terms of extraordinary baseness, had a dog set over them as a governor. What can we suppose to have been his object in this action, unless it were to make a haughty nation feel that their arrogance was being more signally punished when they bowed their stubborn heads before a yapping hound? To let no insult be lacking, he appointed governors to look after public and private affairs in its name; and he appointed separate ranks of nobles to keep continual and steadfast watch over it. He also enacted that if any one of the courtiers thought it contemptible to do allegiance to their chief, and omitted offering most respectful homage to its various goings and comings as it ran hither and thither, he should be punished with loss of his limbs. Also Gunnar imposed on the nation a double tribute, one to be paid out of the autumn harvest, the other in the spring. Thus he burst the bubble conceit of the Norwegians, to make them feel clearly how their pride was gone, when they saw it forced to do homage to a dog.

When he heard that the king's daughter was shut up in some distant hiding-place, Gunnar strained his wits in every nerve to track her out. Hence, while he was himself conducting the search with others, his doubtful ear caught the distant sound of a subterranean hum. Then he went on slowly, and recognized a human voice with greater certainty. He ordered the ground underfoot to be dug down to the solid rock; and when the cave was suddenly laid open, he saw the winding tunnels. The servants were slain as they tried to guard the now uncovered entrance to the cave, and the girl was dragged out of the hole, together with the booty therein concealed. With great foresight, she had consigned at any rate her father's swords to the protection of a more secret place. Gunnar forced her to submit to his will, and she bore a son Hildiger. This man was such a rival to his father in cruelty, that he was ever thirsting to kill, and was bent on nothing but the destruction of men, panting with a boundless lust for bloodshed. Outlawed by his father on account of his unbearable ruthlessness, and soon after presented by Alver with a government, he spent his whole life in arms, visiting his neighbours with wars and slaughters; nor did he, in his estate of banishment, relax his accustomed savagery a whit, but would not change his spirit with his habitation.

Meanwhile Borgar, finding that Gunnar had married

Drota, the daughter of Ragnald, by violence, took from him both life and wife, and wedded Drota himself. She was not an unwilling bride; she thought it right for her to embrace the avenger of her parent. For the daughter mourned her father, and could never bring herself to submit with any pleasure to his murderer. This woman and Borgar had a son Halfdan, who through all his early youth was believed to be stupid, but whose later years proved illustrious for the most glorious deeds, and famous for the highest qualities that can grace life. Once, when a stripling, he mocked in boyish fashion at a champion of noble repute, who smote him with a buffet; whereupon Halfdan attacked him with the staff he was carrying and killed him. This deed was an omen of his future honours; he had hitherto been held in scorn, but henceforth throughout his life he had the highest honour and glory. The affair, indeed, was a prophecy of the greatness of his deeds in war.

At this period, Rothe, a Ruthenian rover, almost destroyed our country with his rapine and cruelty. His harshness was so notable that, while other men spared their prisoners utter nakedness, he did not think it uncomely to strip of their coverings even the privy parts of their bodies; wherefore we are wont to this day to call all severe and monstrous acts of rapine Rothe-Ran (Rothe's Robbery). He used also sometimes to inflict the following kind of torture: Fastening the men's right feet firmly to the earth, he tied the left feet to boughs for the purpose that when these should spring back the body would be rent asunder. Hane, Prince of Funen, wishing to win honour and glory, tried to attack this man with his sea-forces, but took to flight with one attendant. It was in reproach of him that the proverb arose: "The cock (Hane) fights better on its own dunghill." Then Borgar, who could not bear to see his countrymen perishing any longer, encountered Rothe. Together they fought and together they perished. It is said that in this battle Halfdan was sorely stricken, and was for some time feeble with the wounds he had received. One of these was inflicted conspicuously on his mouth, and its scar was so manifest that it remained as an open blotch when all the other wounds were healed; for the crushed portion of the lip was so ulcerated by the swelling, that the flesh would not grow out again and mend the noisome gash. This circumstance fixed on him a most insulting nickname, . . . although wounds in the front of the body commonly bring praise and not ignominy. So spiteful a colour does the belief of the vulgar sometimes put upon men's virtues.

Meanwhile Gurid, the daughter of Alf, seeing that the royal line was reduced to herself alone, and having no equal in birth whom she could marry, proclaimed a vow imposing chasity on herself, thinking it better to have no husband than to take one from the commons. Moreover, to escape outrage, she guarded her room with a chosen band of champions. Once Halfdan happened to come to see her. The champions, whose brother he had himself slain in his boyhood, were away. He told her that she ought to loose her virgin zone, and exchange her austere chastity for deeds of love; that she ought not to give in so much to her inclination for modesty as to be too proud to make a match, and so by her service repair the fallen monarchy. So he bade her look on himself, who was of eminently illustrious birth, in the light of a husband, since it appeared that she would only admit pleasure for the reason he had named. Gurid answered that she could not bring her mind to ally the remnants of the royal line to a man of meaner rank. Not content with reproaching his obscure birth, she also taunted his unsightly countenance. Halfdan rejoined that she brought against him two faults: one that his blood was not illustrious enough; another, that he was blemished with a cracked lip whose scar had never healed. Therefore he would not come back to ask for her before he had wiped away both marks of shame by winning glory in war.

Halfdan entreated her to suffer no man to be privy to her bed until she heard certain tidings either of his return or his death. The champions, whom he had bereaved of their brother long ago, were angry that he had spoken to Gurid, and tried to ride after him as he went away. When he saw it, he told his comrades to go into ambush, and said he would encounter the champions alone. His followers lingered, and thought it shameful to obey his orders, but he drove them off with threats, saying that Gurid should not find that fear had made him refuse to fight. Presently he cut down an oak-tree and fashioned it into a club, fought the twelve single-handed, and killed them. After their destruction, not content with the honours of so splendid an action, and meaning to do one yet greater, he got from his mother the swords of his grandfather, one of which was called Lyusing . . . and the other Hwyting, after the sheen of its well-whetted point. But when he heard that war was raging between Alver, the King of Sweden, and the Ruthenians (Russians), he instantly went to Russia, offered help to the natives, and was received by all with the utmost honour. Alver was not far off, there being only a little ground to cross to cover the distance between the two. Alver's soldier Hildiger, the son of Gunnar, challenged the champions of the Ruthenians to fight him; but when he saw that Halfdan was put up against him, though knowing well that he was Halfdan's brother, he let natural feeling prevail over courage, and said that he, who was famous for the destruction of seventy champions, would not fight with an untried man. Therefore he told him to measure himself in enterprises of lesser moment, and thenceforth to follow pursuits fitted to his strength. He made this announcement not from distrust in his own courage, but in order to preserve his uprightness; for he was not only very valiant, but also skilled at blunting the sword with spells. For when he remembered that Halfdan's father had slain his own, he was moved by two feelings—the desire to avenge his father, and his love for his brother. He therefore thought it better to retire from the challenge than to be guilty of a very great crime. Halfdan demanded another champion in his place, slew him when he appeared, and was soon awarded the palm of valour even by the voice of the enemy, being accounted by public acclamation the bravest of all. On the next day he asked for two men to fight with, and slew them both. On the third day he subdued three; on the fourth he overcame four who met him; and on the fifth he asked for five.

When Halfdan conquered these, and when the eighth day had been reached with an equal increase in the combatants and in the victory, he laid low eleven who attacked him at once. Hildiger, seeing that his own record of honours was equalled by the greatness of Halfdan's deeds could not bear to decline to meet him any longer. And when he felt that Halfdan had dealt him a deadly wound with a sword wrapped in rags, he threw away his arms, and, lying on the earth, addressed his brother as follows:

"It is pleasing to pass an hour away in mutual talk; and, while the sword rests, to sit a little on the ground and while away the time by speaking in turn, and keep ourselves in good heart. Time is left for our purpose; our two destinies have a different lot; one is surely doomed to die by a fatal weird, while triumph and glory and all the good of living await the other in better years. Thus our omens differ, and our portions are distinguished. Thou art a son of the Danish land, I of the country of Sweden. Once, Drota thy mother had her breast swell for thee; she bore me, and by her I am thy foster-brother. Lo now, there perishes a righteous offspring, who had the heart to fight with savage spears; brothers born of a shining race charge and bring death on one another; while they long for the height of power, they lose their days, and, having now received a fatal mischief in their desire for a sceptre, they will go to Styx in a common death. Fast by my head stands my Swedish shield, which is adorned with (as) a fresh mirror of diverse chasing, and ringed with layers of marvellous fretwork. There a picture of many hues shows slain nobles and conquered champions, and the wars also and the notable deed of my right hand. In the midst is to be seen, painted in bright relief, the figure of my son, whom this hand bereft of his span of life. He was our only heir, the only thought of his father's mind, and given to his mother with comfort from above. An evil lot, which heaps years of ill-fortune on the joyous, chokes mirth in mourning, and troubles our destiny. For it is lamentable and wretched to drag out a downcast life, to draw breath through dismal days and to chafe at foreboding. But whatsoever things are bound by the prophetic order of the fates, whatsoever are shadowed in the secrets of the divine plan, whatsoever are foreseen and fixed in the course of the destinies, no change of what is transient shall cancel these things."

When he had thus spoken, Halfdan condemned Hildiger for sloth in avowing so late their bond of brotherhood; he declared he had kept silence that he might not be thought a coward for refusing to fight, or a villain if he fought; and while intent on these words of excuse, he died. But report had given out among the Danes that Hildiger had overthrown Halfdan. After this, Siwar, a Saxon of very high birth, began to be a suitor for Gurid, the only survivor of the royal blood among the Danes. Secretly she preferred Halfdan to him, and imposed on her wooer the condition that he should not ask her in marriage till he had united into one body the kingdom of the Danes, which was now torn limb from limb, and restored by arms what had been wrongfully taken from her. Siwar made a vain attempt to do this; but as he bribed all the guardians, she was at last granted to him in betrothal. Halfdan heard of this in Russia through traders, and voyaged so hard that he arrived before the time of the wedding-rites. On their first day, before he went to the palace, he gave orders that his men should not stir from the watches appointed them till their ears caught the clash of the steel in the distance. Unknown to the guests, he came and stood before the maiden, and, that he might not reveal his meaning to too many by bare and common speech, he composed a dark and ambigous song as follows:

"As I left my father's sceptre, I had no fear of the wiles of woman's device nor of female subtlety.

"When I overthrew one and two, three and four, and soon five, and next six, then seven, and also eight, yea eleven single-handed, triumphant in battle.

"But neither did I then think that I was to be shamed with the taint of disgrace, with thy frailness to thy word and thy beguiling pledges."

Gurid answered: "My soul wavered in suspense, with slender power over events, and shifted about with restless fickleness. The report of thee was so fleeting, so doubtful, borne on uncertain stories, and parched by doubting heart. I feared that the years of thy youth had perished by the sword. Could I withstand singly my elders and governors, when they forbade me to refuse that thing, and pressed me to become a wife? My love and my flame are both yet unchanged, they shall be mate and match to thine; nor has my troth been disturbed, but shall have faithful approach to thee.

"For my promise has not yet beguiled thee at all, though I, being alone, could not reject the counsel of such manifold persuasion, nor oppose their stern bidding in the matter of my consent to the marriage bond."

Before the maiden had finished her answer, Halfdan had already run his sword through the bridegroom. Not content with having killed one man, he massacred most of the guests. Staggering tipsily backwards, the Saxons ran at him, but his servants came up and slaughtered them. After this HALFDAN took Gurid to wife. But finding in her the fault of barrenness, and desiring much to have offspring, he went to Upsala in order to procure fruitfulness for her; and being told in answer, that he must make atonement to the shades of his brother if he would raise up children, he obeyed the oracle, and was comforted by gaining his desire. For he had a son by Gurid, to whom he gave the name of Harald. Under his title Halfdan tried to restore the kingdom of the Danes to its ancient estate, as it was torn asunder by the injuries of the chiefs; but, while fighting in Zealand, he attacked Wesete, a very famous champion, in battle, and was slain. Gurid was at the battle in man's attire, from love for her son. She saw the event; the young man fought hotly, but his companions fled; and she took him on her shoulders to a neighbouring wood. Weariness, more than anything else, kept the enemy from pursuing him; but one of them shot him as he hung, with an arrow, through the hinder parts, and Harald thought that his mother's care brought him more shame than help.

HARALD, being of great beauty and unusual size, and surpassing those of his age in strength and stature, received such favour from Odin (whose oracle was thought to have been the cause of his birth), that steel could not injure his perfect soundness. The result was, that shafts which wounded others were disabled from doing him any harm. Nor was the boon unrequited; for he is reported to have promised to Odin all the souls which his sword cast out of their bodies. He also had his father's deeds recorded for a memorial by craftsmen on a rock in Bleking, whereof I have made mention.

After this, hearing that Wesete was to hold his wedding in Skaane, he went to the feast disguised as a beggar; and when all were sunken in wine and sleep, he battered the bride-chamber with a beam. But Wesete, without inflicting a wound, so beat his mouth with a cudgel, that he took out two teeth; but two grinders unexpectedly broke out afterwards and repaired their loss: an event which earned him the name of Hyldetand, which some declare he obtained on account of a prominent row of teeth. Here he slew Wesete, and got the sovereignty of Skaane. Next he attacked and killed Hather in Jutland; and his fall is marked by the lasting name of the town. After this he overthrew Hunding and Rorik, seized Leire, and reunited the dismembered realm of Denmark into its original shape. Then he found that Asmund, the King of the Wikars, had been deprived of his throne by his elder sister; and, angered by such presumption on the part of a woman, went to Norway with a single ship, while the war was still undecided, to help him. The battle began; and, clothed in a purple cloak, with a coif broidered with gold, and with his hair bound up, he went against the enemy trusting not in arms, but in his silent certainty of his luck, insomuch that he seemed dressed more for a feast than a fray. But his spirit did not match his attire. For, though unarmed and only adorned with his emblems of royalty, he outstripped the rest who bore arms, and exposed himself, lightly-armed as he was, to the hottest perils of the battle. For the shafts aimed against him lost all power to hurt, as if their points had been blunted. When the other side saw him fighting unarmed, they made an attack, and were forced for very shame into assailing him more hotly. But Harald, whole in body, either put them to the sword, or made them take to flight; and thus he overthrew the sister of Asmund, and restored him his kingdom. When Asmund offered him the prizes of victory, he said that the reward of glory was enough by itself; and demeaned himself as greatly in refusing the gifts as he had in earning them. By this he made all men admire his self-restraint as much as his valour; and declared that the victory should give him a harvest not of gold but glory.

Meantime Alver, the King of the Swedes, died leaving sons Olaf, Ing, and Ingild. One of these, Ing, dissatisfied with the honours his father bequeathed him, declared war with the Danes in order to extend his empire. And when Harald wished to inquire of oracles how this war would end, an old man of great height, but lacking one eye, and clad also in a hairy mantle, appeared before him, and declared that he was called Odin, and was versed in the practice of warfare; and he gave him the most useful instruction how to divide up his army in the field. Now he told him, whenever he was going to make war with his land-forces, to divide his whole army into three squadrons, each of which he was to pack into twenty ranks; the centre squadron, however, he was to extend further than the rest by the number of twenty men. This squadron he was also to arrange in the form of the point of a cone or pyramid, and to make the wings on either side slant off obliquely from it. He was to compose the successive ranks of each squadron in the following way: the front should begin with two men, and the number in each succeeding rank should only increase by one; he was, in fact, to post a rank of three in the second line, four in the third, and so on behind. And thus, when the men mustered, all the succeeding ranks were to be manned at the same rate of proportion, until the end of (the edge that made) the junction of men came down to the wings; each wing was to be drawn up in ten lines from that point. Likewise after these squadrons he was to put the young men, equipped with lances, and behind these to set the company of aged men, who would support their comrades with what one might call a veteran valour if they faltered; next, a skilful reckoner should attach wings of slingers to stand behind the ranks of their fellows and attack the enemy from a distance with missiles. After these he was to enroll men of any age or rank indiscriminately, without heed of their estate. Moreover, he was to draw up the rear like the vanguard, in three separated divisions, and arranged in ranks similarly proportioned. The back of this, joining on to the body in front would protect it by facing in the opposite direction. But if a sea-battle happened to occur, he should withdraw a portion of his fleet, which when he began the intended engagement, was to cruise round that of the enemy, wheeling to and fro continually. Equipped with this system of warfare, he forestalled matters in Sweden, and killed Ing and Olaf as they were making ready to fight. Their brother Ingild sent messengers to beg a truce, on pretence of his ill-health. Harald granted his request, that his own valour, which had learnt to spare distress, might not triumph over a man in the hour of lowliness and dejection. When Ingild afterwards provoked Harald by wrongfully ravishing his sister, Harald vexed him with long and indecisive war, but then took him into his friendship, thinking it better to have him for ally than for enemy.

After this he heard that Olaf, King of the Thronds, had to fight with the maidens Stikla and Rusila for the kingdom. Much angered at this arrogance on the part of women, he went to Olaf unobserved, put on dress which concealed the length of his teeth, and attacked the maidens. He overthrew them both, leaving to two harbours a name akin to theirs. It was then that he gave a notable exhibition of valour; for defended only by a shirt under his shoulders, he fronted the spears with unarmed breast.

When Olaf offered Harald the prize of victory, he rejected the gift, thus leaving it a question whether he had shown a greater example of bravery or self-control. Then he attacked a champion of the Frisian nation, named Ubbe, who was ravaging the borders of Jutland and destroying numbers of the common people; and when Harald could not subdue him to his arms, he charged his soldiers to grip him with their hands, throw him on the ground, and to bind him while thus overpowered. Thus he only overcame the man and mastered him by a shameful kind of attack, though a little before he thought he would inflict a heavy defeat on him. But Harald gave him his sister in marriage, and thus gained him for his soldier.

Harald made tributaries of the nations that lay along the Rhine, levying troops from the bravest of that race. With these forces he conquered Sclavonia in war, and caused its generals, Duk and Dal, because of their bravery, to be captured, and not killed. These men he took to serve with him, and, after overcoming Aquitania, soon went to Britain, where he overthrew the King of the Humbrians, and enrolled the smartest of the warriors he had conquered, the chief of whom was esteemed to be Orm, surnamed the Briton. The fame of these deeds brought champions from divers parts of the world, whom he formed into a band of mercenaries. Strengthened by their numbers, he kept down insurrections in all kingdoms by the terror of his name, so that he took out of their rulers all courage to fight with one another. Moreover, no man durst assume any sovereignty on the sea without his consent; for of old the state of the Danes had the joint lordship of land and sea.

Meantime Ingild died in Sweden, leaving only a very little son, Ring, whom he had by the sister of Harald. Harald gave the boy guardians, and put him over his father's kingdom. Thus, when he had overcome princes and provinces, he passed fifty years in peace. To save the minds of his soldiers from being melted into sloth by this inaction, he decreed that they should assiduously learn from the champions the way of parrying and dealing blows. Some of these were skilled in a remarkable manner of fighting, and used to smite the eyebrow on the enemy's forehead with an infallible stroke; but if any man, on receiving the blow, blinked for fear, twitching his eyebrow, he was at once expelled the court and dismissed the service.

At this time Ole, the son of Siward and of Harald's sister, came to Denmark from the land of Norway in the desire to see his uncle. Since it is known that he had the first place among the followers of Harald, and that after the Swedish war he came to the throne of Denmark, it bears somewhat on the subject to relate the traditions of his deeds. Ole, then, when he had passed his tenth to his fifteenth year with his father, showed incredible proofs of his brilliant gifts both of mind and body. Moreover, he was so savage of countenance that his eyes were like the arms of other men against the enemy, and he terrified the bravest with his stern and flashing glance. He heard the tidings that Gunn, ruler of Tellemark, with his son Grim, was haunting as a robber the forest of Etha-scog, which was thick with underbrush and full of gloomy glens. The offence moved his anger; then he asked his father for a horse, a dog, and such armour as could be got, and cursed his youth, which was suffering the right season for valour to slip sluggishly away. He got what he asked, and explored the aforesaid wood very narrowly. He saw the footsteps of a man printed deep on the snow; for the rime was blemished by the steps, and betrayed the robber's progress. Thus guided, he went over a hill, and came on a very great river. This effaced the human tracks he had seen before, and he determined that he must cross. But the mere mass of water, whose waves ran down in a headlong torrent, seemed to forbid all crossing; for it was full of hidden reefs, and the whole length of its channel was turbid with a kind of whirl of foam. Yet all fear of danger was banished from Ole's mind by his impatience to make haste. So valour conquered fear, and rashness scorned peril; thinking nothing hard to do if it were only to his mind, he crossed the hissing eddies on horseback. When he had passed these, he came upon defiles surrounded on all sides with swamps, the interior of which was barred from easy approach by the pinnacle of a bank in front. He took his horse over this, and saw an enclosure with a number of stalls. Out of this he turned many horses, and was minded to put in his own, when a certain Tok, a servant of Gunn, angry that a stranger should wax so insolent, attacked him fiercely; but Ole foiled his assailant by simply opposing his shield. Thinking it a shame to slay the fellow with the sword, he seized him, shattered him limb by limb, and flung him across into the house whence he had issued in his haste. This insult quickly aroused Gunn and Grim: they ran out by different side-doors, and charged Ole both at once, despising his age and strength. He wounded them fatally; and, when their bodily powers were quite spent, Grim, who could scarce muster a final gasp, and whose force was almost utterly gone, with his last pants composed this song:

"Though we be weak in frame, and the loss of blood has drained our strength; since the life-breath, now drawn out by my wound, scarce quivers softly in my pierced breast:

"I counsel that we should make the battle of our last hour glorious with dauntless deeds, that none may say that a combat has anywhere been bravelier waged or harder fought;

"And that our wild strife while we bore arms may, when our weary flesh has found rest in the tomb, win us the wage of immortal fame.

"Let our first stroke crush the shoulder-blades of the foe, let our steel cut off both his hands; so that, when Stygian Pluto has taken us, a like doom may fall on Ole also, and a common death tremble over three, and one urn cover the ashes of three."

Here Grim ended. But his father, rivalling his indomitable spirit, and wishing to give some exhortation in answer to his son's valiant speech, thus began:

"What though our veins be wholly bloodless, and in our frail body the life be brief, yet our last fight be so strong and strenuous that it suffer not the praise of us to be brief also.

"Therefore aim the javelin first at the shoulders and arms of the foe, so that the work of his hands may be weakened; and thus when we are gone three shall receive a common sepulchre, and one urn alike for three shall cover our united dust."

When he had said this, both of them, resting on their knees (for the approach of death had drained their strength), made a desperate effort to fight Ole hand to hand, in order that, before they perished, they might slay their enemy also; counting death as nothing if only they might envelope their slayer in a common fall. Ole slew one of them with his sword, the other with his hound. But even he gained no bloodless victory; for though he had been hitherto unscathed, now at last he received a wound in front. His dog diligently licked him over, and he regained his bodily strength: and soon, to publish sure news of his victory, he hung the bodies of the robbers upon gibbets in wide view. Moreover, he took the stronghold, and put in secret keeping all the booty he found there, in reserve for future use.

At this time the arrogant wantonness of the brothers Skate and Hiale waxed so high that they would take virgins of notable beauty from their parents and ravish them. Hence it came about that they formed the purpose of seizing Esa, the daughter of Olaf, prince of the Werms; and bade her father, if he would not have her serve the passion of a stranger, fight either in person, or by some deputy, in defence of his child. When Ole had news of this, he rejoiced in the chance of a battle, and borrowing the attire of a peasant, went to the dwelling of Olaf. He received one of the lowest places at table; and when he saw the household of the king in sorrow, he called the king's son closer to him, and asked why they all wore so lamentable a face. The other answered, that unless someone quickly interposed to protect them, his sister's chastity would soon be outraged by some ferocious champions. Ole next asked him what reward would be received by the man who devoted his life for the maiden. Olaf, on his son asking him about this matter, said that his daughter should go to the man who fought for her: and these words, more than anything, made Ole long to encounter the danger.

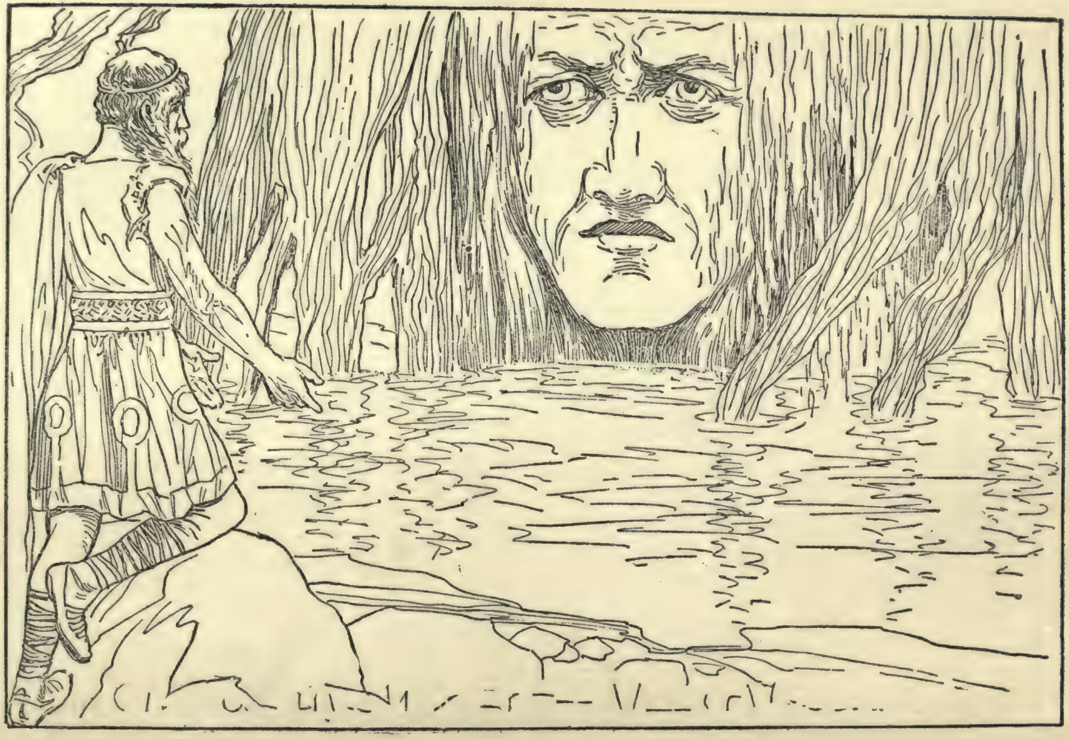
Now the maiden was wont to go from one guest to another in order to scan their faces narrowly, holding out a light that she might have a surer view of the dress and character of those who were entertained. It is also believed that she divined their lineage from the lines and features of the face, and could discern any man's birth by sheer shrewdness of vision. When she stood and fixed the scrutiny of her gaze upon Olaf, she was stricken with the strange awfulness of his eyes, and fell almost lifeless. But when her strength came slowly back, and her breath went and came more freely, she again tried to look at the young man, but suddenly slipped and fell forward, as though distraught. A third time also she strove to lift her closed and downcast gaze, but suddenly tottered and fell, unable not only to move her eyes, but even to control her feet; so much can strength be palsied by amazement. When Olaf saw it, he asked her why she had fallen so often. She averred that she was stricken by the savage gaze of the guest; that he was born of kings; and she declared that if he could baulk the will of the ravishers, he was well worthy of her arms. Then all of them asked Ole, who was keeping his face muffled in a hat, to fling off his covering, and let them see something by which to learn his features. Then, bidding them all lay aside their grief, and keep their heart far from sorrow, he uncovered his brow; and he drew the eyes of all upon him in marvel at his great beauty. For his locks were golden and the hair of his head was radiant; but he kept the lids close over his pupils, that they might not terrify the beholders.

All were heartened with the hope of better things; the guests seemed to dance and the courtiers to leap for joy; the deepest melancholy seemed to be scattered by an outburst of cheerfulness. Thus hope relieved their fears; the banquet wore a new face, and nothing was the same, or like what it had been before. So the kindly promise of a single guest dispelled the universal terror. Meanwhile Hiale and Skate came up with ten servants, meaning to carry off the maiden then and there, and disturbed all the place with their noisy shouts. They called on the king to give battle, unless he produced his daughter instantly. Ole at once met their frenzy with the promise to fight, adding the condition that no one should stealthily attack an opponent in the rear, but should only combat in the battle face to face. Then, with his sword called Logthi, he felled them all, single-handed—an achievement beyond his years. The ground for the battle was found on an isle in the middle of a swamp, not far from which is a stead that serves to memorise this slaughter, bearing the names of the brothers Hiale and Skate together.

So the girl was given him as prize of the combat, and bore him a son Omund. Then he gained his father-in-law's leave to revisit his father. But when he heard that his country was being attacked by Thore, with the help of Toste Sacrificer, and Leotar, surnamed . . . . he went to fight them, content with a single servant, who was dressed as a woman. When he was near the house of Thore, he concealed his own and his attendant's swords in hollowed staves. And when he entered the palace, he disguised his true countenance, and feigned to be a man broken with age. He said that with Siward he had been king of the beggars, but that he was now in exile, having been stubbornly driven forth by the hatred of the king's son Ole. Presently many of the courtiers greeted him with the name of king, and began to kneel and offer him their hands in mockery. He told them to bear out in deeds what they had done in jest; and, plucking out the swords which he and his man kept shut in their staves, attacked the king. So some aided Ole, taking it more as jest than earnest, and would not be false to the loyalty which they mockingly yielded him; but most of them, breaking their idle vow, took the side of Thore. Thus arose an internecine and undecided fray. At last Thore was overwhelmed and slain by the arms of his own folk, as much as by these of his guests; and Leotar, wounded to the death, and judging that his conqueror, Ole, was as keen in mind as he was valorous in deeds, gave him the name of the Vigorous, and prophesied that he should perish by the same kind of trick as he had used with Thore; for, without question he should fall by the treachery of his own house. And, as he spoke, he suddenly passed away. Thus we can see that the last speech of the dying man expressed by its shrewd divination the end that should come upon his conqueror.

After these deeds Ole did not go back to his father till he had restored peace to his house. His father gave him the command of the sea, and he destroyed seventy sea-kings in a naval battle. The most distinguished among these were Birwil and Hwirwil, Thorwil, Nef and Onef, Redward (?), Rand and Erand (?). By the honour and glory of this exploit he excited many champions, whose whole heart's desire was for bravery, to join in alliance with him. He also enrolled into a bodyguard the wild young warriors who were kindled with a passion for glory. Among these he received Starkad with the greatest honour, and cherished him with more friendship than profit. Thus fortified, he checked, by the greatness of his name, the wantonness of the neighbouring kings, in that he took from them all their forces and all liking and heart for mutual warfare.

After this he went to Harald, who made him commander of the sea; and at last he was transferred to the service of Ring. At this time one Brun was the sole partner and confidant of all Harald's councils. To this man both Harald and Ring, whenever they needed a secret messenger, used to entrust their commissions. This degree of intimacy he obtained because he had been reared and fostered with them. But Brun, amid the toils of his constant journeys to and fro, was drowned in a certain river; and Odin, disguised under his name and looks, shook the close union of the kings by his treacherous embassage; and he sowed strife so guilefully that he engendered in men, who were bound by friendship and blood, a bitter mutual hate, which seemed unappeasable except by war. Their dissensions first grew up silently; at last both sides betrayed their leanings, and their secret malice burst into the light of day. So they declared their feuds, and seven years passed in collecting the materials of war. Some say that Harald secretly sought occasions to destroy himself, not being moved by malice or jealousy for the crown, but by a deliberate and voluntary effort. His old age and his cruelty made him a burden to his subjects; he preferred the sword to the pangs of disease, and liked better to lay down his life in the battle-field than in his bed, that he might have an end in harmony with the deeds of his past life. Thus, to make his death more illustrious, and go to the nether world in a larger company, he longed to summon many men to share his end; and he therefore of his own will prepared for war, in order to make food for future slaughter. For these reasons, being seized with as great a thirst to die himself as to kill others, and wishing the massacre on both sides to be equal, he furnished both sides with equal resources; but let Ring have a somewhat stronger force, preferring he should conquer and survive him.



BOOK EIGHT.

STARKAD was the first to set in order in Danish speech the history of the Swedish war, a conflict whereof he was himself a mighty pillar; the said history being rather an oral than a written tradition. He set forth and arranged the course of this war in the mother tongue according to the fashion of our country; but I purpose to put it into Latin, and will first recount the most illustrious princes on either side. For I have felt no desire to include the multitude, which are even past exact numbering. And my pen shall relate first those on the side of Harald, and presently those who served under Ring.

Now the most famous of the captains that mustered to Harald are acknowledged to have been Sweyn and Sambar (Sam?), Ambar and Elli; Rati of Funen, Salgard and Roe (Hrothgar), whom his long beard distinguished by a nickname. Besides these, Skalk the Scanian, and Alf the son of Agg; to whom are joined Olwir the Broad, and Gnepie the Old. Besides these there was Gardh, founder of the town Stang. To these are added the kinsfolk or bound followers of Harald: Blend (Blaeng?), the dweller in furthest Thule,* and Brand, whose surname was Crumb (Bitling?). Allied with these were Thorgny, with Thorwig, Tatar (Teit), and Hialte. These men voyaged to Leire with bodies armed for war; but they were also mighty in excellence of wit, and their trained courage matched their great stature; for they had skill in discharging arrows both from bow and catapult, and at fighting their foe as they commonly did, man to man; and also at readily stringing together verse in the speech of their country: so zealously had they trained mind and body alike. Now out of Leire came Hortar (Hjort) and Borrhy (Borgar *or* Borgny), and also Belgi and Beigad, to whom were added Bari and Toli. Now out of the town of Sle, under the captains Hetha (Heid) and Wisna, with Hakon Cut-cheek came Tummi the Sailmaker. On these captains, who had the bodies of women, nature bestowed the souls of men. Webiorg was also inspired with the same spirit, and was attended by Bo (Bui) Bramason and Brat the Jute, thirsting for war. In the same throng came Orm of England, Ubbe the Frisian, Ari the One-eyed, and Alf Gotar. Next in the count came Dal the Fat and Duk the Sclav; Wisna, a woman, filled with sternness, and a skilled warrior, was guarded by a band of Sclavs: her chief followers were Barri and Gnizli. But the rest of the same company had their bodies covered by little shields, and used very long swords and targets of skiey hue, which, in time of war, they either cast behind their backs or gave over to the baggage-bearers; while they cast away all protection to their breasts, and exposed their bodies to every peril, offering battle with drawn swords. The most illustrious of these were Tolkar and Ymi. After these, Toki of the province of Wollin was conspicuous together with Otrit surnamed the Young.

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*Furthest Thule] The names of Icelanders have thus crept into the account of a battle fought before the discovery of Iceland.

Hetha, guarded by a retinue of very active men, brought an armed company to the war, the chiefs of whom were Grim and Grenzli; next to whom are named Geir the Livonian, Hame also and Hunger, Humbli and Biari, bravest of the princes. These men often fought duels successfully, and won famous victories far and wide.

The maidens I have named, in fighting as well as courteous array, led their land-forces to the battle-field. Thus the Danish army mustered company by company. There were seven kings, equal in spirit but differing in allegiance, some defending Harald, and some Ring. Moreover, the following went to the side of Harald: Homi and Hosathul (Eysothul?), Him . . . . ., Hastin and Hythin (Hedin) 12 the Slight, also Dahar (Dag), named Grenski, and Harald Olafsson also. From the province of Aland came Har and Herlewar (Herleif), with Hothbrodd, surnamed the Furious; these fought in the Danish camp. But from Imisland arrived Humnehy (?) and Harald. They were joined by Haki and by Sigmund and Serker the sons of Bemon, all coming from the North. All these were retainers of the king, who befriended them most generously; for they were held in the highest distinction by him, receiving swords adorned with gold, and the choicest spoils of war. There came also . . . . . the sons of Gandal the old, who were in the intimate favour of Harald by reason of ancient allegiance. Thus the sea was studded with the Danish fleet, and semed to interpose a bridge, uniting Zealand to Skaane. To those that wished to pass between those provinces, the sea offered a short road on foot over the dense mass of ships. But Harald would not have the Swedes unprepared in their arrangements for war, and sent men to Ring to carry his public declaration of hostilities, and notify the rupture of the mediating peace. The same men were directed to prescribe the place of combat. These then whom I have named were the fighters for Harald.

Now, on the side of Ring were numbered Ulf, Aggi (Aki?), Windar (Eywind?), Egil the One-eyed; Gotar, Hildi, Guti Alfsson; Styr the Stout, and (Tolo-) Stein, who lived by the Wienic Mere. To these were joined Gerd the Glad and Gromer (Glum?) from Wermland. After these are reckoned the dwellers north on the Elbe, Saxo the Splitter, Sali the Goth; Thord the Stumbler, Throndar Big-nose; Grundi, Oddi, Grindir, Tovi; Koll, Biarki, Hogni the Clever, Rokar the Swart. Now these scorned fellowship with the common soldiers, and had formed themselves into a separate rank apart from the rest of the company. Besides these are numbered Hrani Hildisson and Lyuth Guthi (Hljot Godi), Svein the Topshorn, (Soknarsoti?), Rethyr (Hreidar?) Hawk, and Rolf the Uxorious (Woman-lover). Massed with these were Ring Adilsson and Harald who came from Thotn district. Joined to these were Walstein of Wick, Thorolf the Thick, Thengel the Tall, Hun, Solwe, Birwil the Pale, Borgar and Skumbar (Skum). But from Tellemark came the bravest of all, who had most courage but least arrogance—Thorleif the Stubborn, Thorkill the Gute (Gothlander), Grettir the Wicked and the Lover of Invasions. Next to these came Hadd the Hard and Rolder (Hroald) Toe-joint.

From Norway we have the names of Thrand of Throndhjem, Thoke (Thore) of More, Hrafn the White, Haf (war), Biarni, Blihar (Blig?) surnamed Snub-nosed; Biorn from the district of Sogni; Findar (Finn) born in the Firth; Bersi born in the town F(i)alu; Siward Boarhead, Erik the Story-teller, Holmstein the White, Hrut Rawi (*or* Vafi, the Doubter), Erling surnamed Snake. Now from the province of Jather came Odd the Englishman, Alf the Far-wanderer, Enar the Paunched, and Ywar surnamed Thriug. Now from Thule (Iceland) came Mar the Red, born and bred in the district called Midfirth; Grombar the Aged, Gram Brundeluk (Bryndalk?) Grim from the town of Skier (um) born in Skagafiord. Next came Berg the Seer, accompanied by Bragi and Rafnkel.

Now the bravest of the Swedes were these: Arwakki, Keklu-Karl (Kelke-Karl), Krok the Peasant, (from Akr), Gudfast and Gummi from Gislamark. These were kindred of the god Frey, and most faithful witnesses to the gods. Ingi (Yngwe) also, and Oly, Alver, Folki, all sons of Elrik (Alrek), embraced the service of Ring; they were men ready of hand, quick in counsel, and very close friends of Ring. They likewise held the god Frey to be the founder of their race. Amongst these from the town of Sigtun also came Sigmund, a champion advocate, versed in making contracts of sale and purchase; besides him Frosti surnamed Bowl: allied with him was Alf the Lofty (Proud?) from the district of Upsala; this man was a swift spear-thrower, and used to go in the front of the battle.

Ole had a body-guard in which were seven kings, very ready of hand and of counsel; namely, Holti, Hendil, Holmar, Lewy (Leif), and Hame; with these was enrolled Regnald the Russian, the grandson of Radbard; and Siwald also furrowed the sea with eleven light ships. Lesy (Laesi), the conqueror of the Pannonians (Huns), fitted with a sail his swift galley ringed with gold. Thririkar (Erik Helsing) sailed in a ship whose prows were twisted like a dragon. Also Thrygir (Tryggve) and Torwil sailed and brought twelve ships jointly. In the entire fleet of Ring there were 2,500 ships.

The fleet of Gotland was waiting for the Swedish fleet in the harbour named Garnum. So Ring led the land-force, while Ole was instructed to command the fleet. Now the Goths were appointed a time and a place between Wik and Werund for the conflict with the Swedes. Then was the sea to be seen furrowed up with prows, and the canvas unfurled upon the masts cut off the view over the ocean. The Danes had so far been distressed with bad weather; but the Swedish fleet had a fair voyage, and had reached the scene of battle earlier. Here Ring disembarked his forces from his fleet, and then massed and prepared to draw up in line both these and the army he had himself conducted overland. When these forces were at first loosely drawn up over the open country, it was found that one wing reached all the way to Werund. The multitude was confused in its places and ranks; but the king rode round it, and posted in the van all the smartest and most excellently-armed men, led by Ole, Regnald, and Wivil;

then he massed the rest of the army on the two wings in a kind of curve. Ung, with the sons of Alrek, and Trig, he ordered to protect the right wing, while the left was put under the command of Laesi. Moreover, the wings and the masses were composed mainly of a close squadron of Kurlanders and of Esthonians. Last stood the line of slingers.

Meantime the Danish fleet, favoured by kindly winds, sailed, without stopping, for twelve days, and came to the town (stead) of Kalmar. The wind-blown sails covering the waters were a marvel; and the canvas stretched upon the yards blotted out the sight of the heavens. For the fleet was augmented by the Sclavs and the Livonians and 7,000 Saxons. But the Skanians, knowing the country, were appointed as guides and scouts to those who were going over the dry land. So when the Danish army came upon the Swedes, who stood awaiting them, Ring told his men to stand quietly until Harald had drawn up his line of battle; bidding them not to sound the signal before they saw the king settled in his chariot beside the standards; for he said he should hope that an army would soon come to grief which trusted in the leading of a blind man. Harald, moreover, he said, had been seized in extreme age with the desire of foreign empire, and was as witless as he was sightless; wealth could not satisfy a man who, if he looked to his years, ought to be well-nigh contented with a grave. The Swedes therefore were bound to fight for their freedom, their country, and their children, while the enemy had undertaken the war in rashness and arrogance. Moreover, on the other side, there were very few Danes, but a mass of Saxons and other unmanly peoples stood arrayed. Swedes and Norwegians should therefore consider how far the multitudes of the North had always surpassed the Germans and the Sclavs. They should therefore despise an army which seemed to be composed more of a mass of fickle offscourings than of a firm and stout soldiery.

By this harangue of King Ring he kindled high the hearts of the soldiers. Now Brun, being instructed to form the line on Harald's behalf, made the front in a wedge, posting Hetha on the right flank, putting Hakon in command of the left, and making Wisna standard-bearer. Harald stood up in his chariot and complained, in as loud a voice as he could, that Ring was requiting his benefits with wrongs; that the man who had got his kingdom by Harald's own gift was now attacking him; so that Ring neither pitied an old man nor spared an uncle, but set his own ambitions before any regard for Harald's kinship or kindness. So he bade the Danes remember how they had always won glory by foreign conquest, and how they were more wont to command their neighbours than to obey them. He adjured them not to let such glory as theirs to be shaken by the insolence of a conquered nation, nor to suffer the empire, which he had won in the flower of his youth, to be taken from him in his outworn age.

Then the trumpets sounded, and both sides engaged in battle with all their strength. The sky seemed to fall suddenly on the earth, fields and woods to sink into the ground; all things were confounded, and old Chaos come again; heaven and earth mingling in one tempestuous turmoil, and the world rushing to universal ruin. For, when the spear-throwing began, the intolerable clash of arms filled the air with an incredible thunder. The steam of the wounds suddenly hung a mist over the sky, the daylight was hidden under the hail of spears. The help of the slingers was of great use in the battle. But when the missiles had all been flung from hand or engines, they fought with swords or iron-shod maces; and it was now at close quarters that most blood was spilt. Then the sweat streamed down their weary bodies, and the clash of the swords could be heard afar.

Starkad, who was the first to set forth the history of this war in the telling, fought foremost in the fray, and relates that he overthrew the nobles of Harald, Hun and Elli, Hort and Burgha, and cut off the right hand of Wisna. He also relates that one Roa, with two others, Gnepie and Gardar, fell wounded by him in the field. To these he adds the father of Skalk, whose name is not given. He also declares that he cast Hakon, the bravest of the Danes, to the earth, but received from him such a wound in return that he had to leave the war with his lung protruding from his chest, his neck cleft to the centre, and his hand deprived of one finger; so that he long had a gaping wound, which seemed as if it would never either scar over or be curable. The same man witnesses that the maiden Weghbiorg (Webiorg) fought against the enemy and felled Soth the champion. While she was threatening to slay more champions, she was pierced through by an arrow from the bowstring of Thorkill, a native of Tellemark. For the skilled archers of the Gotlanders strung their bows so hard that the shafts pierced through even the shields; nothing proved more murderous; for the arrow-points made their way through hauberk and helmet as if they were men's defenceless bodies.

Meanwhile Ubbe the Frisian, who was the readiest of Harald's soldiers, and of notable bodily stature, slew twenty-five picked champions, besides eleven whom he had wounded in the field. All these were of Swedish or Gothic blood. Then he attacked the vanguard and burst into the thickest of the enemy, driving the Swedes struggling in a panic every way with spear and sword. It had all but come to a flight, when Hagder (Hadd), Rolder (Hroald), and Grettir attacked the champion, emulating his valour, and resolving at their own risk to retrieve the general ruin. But, fearing to assault him at close quarters, they accomplished their end with arrows from afar; and thus Ubbe was riddled by a shower of arrows, no one daring to fight him hand to hand. A hundred and forty-four arrows had pierced the breast of the warrior before his bodily strength failed and he bent his knee to the earth. Then at last the Danes suffered a great defeat, owing to the Thronds and the dwellers in the province of Dala. For the battle began afresh by reason of the vast mass of the archers, and nothing damaged our men more.

But when Harald, being now blind with age, heard the lamentable murmur of his men, he perceived that fortune had smiled on his enemies. So, as he was riding in a chariot armed with scythes, he told Brun, who was treacherously acting as charioteer, to find out in what manner Ring had his line drawn up. Brun's face relaxed into something of a smile, and he answered that he was fighting with a line in the form of a wedge. When the king heard this he began to be alarmed, and to ask in great astonishment from whom Ring could have learnt this method of disposing his line, especially as Odin was the discoverer and imparter of this teaching, and none but himself had ever learnt from him this new pattern of warfare. At this Brun was silent, and it came into the king's mind that here was Odin, and that the god whom he had once known so well was now disguised in a changeful shape, in order either to give help or withhold it. Presently he began to beseech him earnestly to grant the final victory to the Danes, since he had helped them so graciously before, and to fill up his last kindness to the measure of the first; promising to dedicate to him as a gift the spirits of all who fell. But Brun, utterly unmoved by his entreaties, suddenly jerked the king out of the chariot, battered him to the earth, plucked the club from him as he fell, whirled it upon his head, and slew him with his own weapon. Countless corpses lay round the king's chariot, and the horrid heap overtopped the wheels; the pile of carcases rose as high as the pole. For about 12,000 of the nobles of Ring fell upon the field. But on the side of Harald about 30,000 nobles fell, not to name the slaughter of the commons.

When Ring heard that Harald was dead, he gave the signal to his men to break up their line and cease fighting. Then under cover of truce he made treaty with the enemy, telling them that it was vain to prolong the fray without their captain. Next he told the Swedes to look everywhere among the confused piles of carcases for the body of Harald, that the corpse of the king might not wrongfully lack its due rights. So the populace set eagerly to the task of turning over the bodies of the slain, and over this work half the day was spent. At last the body was found with the club, and he thought that propitiation should be made to the shade of Harald. So he harnessed the horse on which he rode to the chariot of the king, decked it honourably with a golden saddle, and hallowed it in his honour. Then he proclaimed his vows, and added his prayer that Harald would ride on this and outstrip those who shared his death in their journey to Tartarus; and that he would pray Pluto, the lord of Orcus, to grant a calm abode there for friend and foe. Then he raised a pyre. and bade the Danes fling on the gilded chariot of their king as fuel to the fire. And while the flames were burning the body cast upon them, he went round the mourning nobles and earnestly charged them that they should freely give arms, gold, and every precious thing to feed the pyre in honour of so great a king, who had deserved so nobly of them all. He also ordered that the ashes of his body, when it was quite burnt, should be transferred to an urn, taken to Leire, and there, together with the horse and armour, receive a royal funeral. By paying these due rites of honour to his uncle's shade, he won the favour of the Danes, and turned the hate of his enemies into goodwill. Then the Danes besought him to appoint Hetha over the remainder of the realm; but, that the fallen strength of the enemy might not suddenly rally, he severed Skaane from the mass of Denmark, and put it separately under the governorship of Ole, ordering that only Zealand and the other lands of the realm should be subject to Hetha. Thus the changes of fortune brought the empire of Denmark under the Swedish rule. So ended the Bravic war.

But the Zealanders, who had had Harald for their captain, and still had the picture of their former fortune hovering before their minds, thought it shameful to obey the rule of a woman, and appealed to OLE not to suffer men that had been used to serve under a famous king to be kept under a woman's yoke. They also promised to revolt to him if he would take up arms to remove their ignominious lot. Ole, tempted as much by the memory of his ancestral glory as by the homage of the soldiers, was not slow to answer their entreaties. So he summoned Hetha, and forced her by threats rather than by arms to quit every region under her control except Jutland; and even Jutland he made a tributary state, so as not to allow a woman the free control of a kingdom. He also begot a son whom he named Omund. But he was given to cruelty, and showed himself such an unrighteous king, that all who had found it a shameful thing to be ruled by a queen now repented of their former scorn.

Twelve generals, whether moved by the disasters of their country, or hating Ole for some other reason, began to plot against his life. Among these were Hlenni, Atyl, Thott, and Withne, the last of whom was a Dane by birth, though he held a government among the Sclavs. Moreover, not trusting in their strength and their cunning to accomplish their deed, they bribed Starkad to join them. He was prevailed to do the deed with the sword; he undertook the bloody work, and resolved to attack the king while at the bath. In he went while the king was washing, but was straightway stricken by the keenness of his gaze and by the restless and quivering glare of his eyes. His limbs were palsied with sudden dread; he paused, stepped back, and stayed his hand and his purpose. Thus he who had shattered the arms of so many captains and champions could not bear the gaze of a single unarmed man. But Ole, who well knew about his own countenance, covered his face, and asked him to come closer and tell him what his message was; for old fellowship and long-tried friendship made him the last to suspect treachery. But Starkad drew his sword, leapt forward, thrust the king through, and struck him in the throat as he tried to rise. One hundred and twenty marks of gold were kept for his reward. Soon afterwards he was smitten with remorse and shame, and lamented his crime so bitterly, that he could not refrain from tears if it happened to be named. Thus his soul, when he came to his senses, blushed for his abominable sin. Moreover, to atone for the crime he had committed, he slew some of those who had inspired him to it, thus avenging the act to which he had lent his hand.

Now the Danes made OMUND, the son of Ole, king, thinking that more heed should be paid to his father's birth than to his deserts. Omund, when he had grown up, fell in no wise behind the exploits of his father; for he made it his aim to equal or surpass the deeds of Ole.

At this time a considerable tribe of the Northmen (Norwegians) was governed by Ring, and his daughter Esa's great fame commended her to Omund, who was looking out for a wife.

But his hopes of wooing her were lessened by the peculiar inclination of Ring, who desired no son-in-law but one of tried valour; for he found as much honour in arms as others think lies in wealth. Omund therefore, wishing to become famous in that fashion, and to win the praise of valour, endeavoured to gain his desire by force, and sailed to Norway with a fleet, to make an attempt on the throne of Ring under plea of hereditary right. Odd, the chief of Jather, who declared that Ring had assuredly seized his inheritance, and lamented that he harried him with continual wrongs, received Omund kindly. Ring, in the meantime, was on a roving raid in Ireland, so that Omund attacked a province without a defender. Sparing the goods of the common people, he gave the private property of Ring over to be plundered, and slew his kinsfolk; Odd also having joined his forces to Omund. Now, among all his divers and manifold deeds, he could never bring himself to attack an inferior force, remembering that he was the son of a most valiant father, and that he was bound to fight armed with courage, and not with numbers.

Meanwhile Ring had returned from roving; and when

Omund heard he was back, he set to and built a vast ship, whence, as from a fortress, he could rain his missiles on the enemy. To manage this ship he enlisted Homod and Thole the rowers, the sons of Atyl the Skanian, one of whom was instructed to act as steersman, while the other was to command at the prow. Ring lacked neither skill nor dexterity to encounter them. For he showed only a small part of his forces, and caused the enemy to be attacked on the rear. Omund. when told of his strategy by Odd, sent men to overpower those posted in ambush, telling Atyl the Skanian to encounter Ring. The order was executed with more rashness than success; and Atyl, with his power defeated and shattered, fled beaten to Skaane. Then Omund recruited his forces with the help of Odd, and drew up his fleet to fight on the open sea.

Atyl at this time had true visions of the Norwegian war in his dreams, and started on his voyage in order to make up for his flight as quickly as possible, and delighted Omund by joining him on the eve of battle. Trusting in his help, Omund began to fight with equal confidence and success. For, by fighting himself, he retrieved the victory which he had lost when his servants were engaged. Ring, wounded to the death, gazed at him with faint eyes, and, beckoning to him with his hand, as well as he could—for his voice failed him—he besought him to be his son-in-law, saying that he would gladly meet his end if he left his daughter to such a husband. Before he could receive an answer he died. Omund wept for his death, and gave Homod, whose trusty help he had received in the war, in marriage to one of the daughters of Ring, taking the other himself.

At the same time the amazon Rusla, whose prowess in warfare exceeded the spirit of a woman, had many fights in Norway with her brother, Thrond, for the sovereignty. She could not endure that Omund rule over the Norwegians, and she had declared war against all the subjects of the Danes. Omund, when he heard of this, commissioned his most active men to suppress the rising. Rusla conquered them, and, waxing haughty on her triumph, was seized with overweening hopes, and bent her mind upon actually acquiring the sovereignty of Denmark. She began her attack on the region of Halland, but was met by Homod and Thode, whom the king had sent over. Beaten, she retreated to her fleet, of which only thirty ships managed to escape, the rest being taken by the enemy. Throne encountered his sister as she was eluding the Danes, but was conquered by her and stripped of his entire army; he fled over the Dovrefjeld without a single companion. Thus she, who had first yielded before the Danes, soon overcame her brother, and turned her flight into a victory. When Omund heard of this, he went back to Norway with a great fleet, first sending Homod and Thole by a short and secret way to rouse the people of Tellemark against the rule of Rusla. The end was that she was driven out of her kingdom by the commons, fled to the isles for safety, and turned her back, without a blow, upon the Danes as they came up. The king pursued her hotly, caught up her fleet on the sea, and utterly destroyed it, the enemy suffered mightily, and he won a bloodless victory and splendid spoils. But Rusla escaped with a very few ships, and rowed ploughing the waves furiously; but, while she was avoiding the Danes, she met her brother and was killed. So much more effectual for harm are dangers unsurmised; and chance sometimes makes the less alarming evil worse than that which threatens. The king gave Thrond a governorship for slaying his sister, put the rest under tribute, and returned home.

At this time Thorias (?) and Ber (Biorn), the most active of the soldiers of Rusla, were roving in Ireland; but when they heard of the death of their mistress, whom they had long ago sworn to avenge, they hotly attacked Omund, and challenged him to a duel, which it used to be accounted shameful for a king to refuse; for the fame of princes of old was reckoned more by arms than by riches. So Homod and Thole came forward, offering to meet in battle the men who had challenged the king. Omund praised them warmly, but at first declined for very shame to allow their help. At last, hard besought by his people, he brought himself to try his fortune by the hand of another. We are told that Ber fell in this combat, while Thorias left the battle severely wounded. The king, having first cured him of his wounds, took him into his service, and made him prince (earl) over Norway. Then he sent ambassadors to exact the usual tribute from the Sclavs; these were killed, and he was even attacked in Jutland by a Sclavish force; but he overcame seven kings in a single combat, and ratified by conquest his accustomed right to tribute.

Meantime, Starkad, who was now worn out with extreme age, and who seemed to be past military service and the calling of a champion, was loth to lose his ancient glory through the fault of eld, and thought it would be a noble thing if he could make a voluntary end, and hasten his death by his own free will. Having so often fought nobly, he thought it would be mean to die a bloodless death; and, wishing to enhance the glory of his past life by the lustre of his end, he preferred to be slain by some man of gallant birth rather than await the tardy shaft of nature. So shameful was it thought that men devoted to war should die by disease. His body was weak, and his eyes could not see clearly, so that he hated to linger any more in life. In order to buy himself an executioner, he wore hanging on his neck the gold which he had earned for the murder of Ole; thinking there was no fitter way of atoning for the treason he had done than to make the price of Ole's death that of his own also, and to spend on the loss of his own life what he had earned by the slaying of another. This, he thought, would be the noblest use he could make of that shameful price. So he girded him with two swords, and guided his powerless steps leaning on two staves.

One of the common people, seeing him, thinking two swords superfluous for the use of an old man, mockingly asked him to make him a present of one of them. Starkad, holding out hopes of consent, bade him come nearer, drew the sword from his side, and ran him through. This was seen by a certain Hather, whose father Hlenne Starkad had once killed in repentance for his own impious crime. Hather was hunting game with his dogs, but now gave over the chase, and bade two of his companions spur their horses hard and charge at the old man to frighten him. They galloped forward, and tried to make off, but were stopped by the staves of Starkad, and paid for it with their lives. Hather, terrified by the sight, galloped up closer, and saw who the old man was, but without being recognized by him in turn; and asked him if he would like to exchange his sword for a carriage. Starkad replied that he used in old days to chastise jeerers, and that the insolent had never insulted him unpunished. But his sightless eyes could not recognize the features of the youth; so he composed a song, wherein he should declare the greatness of his anger, as follows:

"As the unreturning waters sweep down the channel; so, as the years run by, the life of man flows on never to come back; fast gallops the cycle of doom, child of old age who shall make an end of all. Old age smites alike the eyes and the steps of men, robs the warrior of his speech and soul, tarnishes his fame by slow degrees, and wipes out his deeds of honour. It seizes his failing limbs, chokes his panting utterance, and numbs his nimble wit. When a cough is taken, when the skin itches with the scab, and the teeth are numb and hollow, and the stomach turns squeamish,—then old age banishes the grace of youth, covers the complexion with decay, and sows many a wrinkle in the dusky skin. Old age crushes noble arts, brings down the memorials of men of old, and scorches ancient glories up; shatters wealth, hungrily gnaws away the worth and good of virtue, turns athwart and disorders all things.

"I myself have felt the hurtful power of injurious age, I, dim-sighted, and hoarse in my tones and in my chest; and all helpful things have turned to my hurt. Now my body is less nimble, and I prop it up, leaning my faint limbs on the support of staves. Sightless I guide my steps with two sticks, and follow the short path which the rod shows me, trusting more in the leading of a stock than in my eyes. None takes any charge of me, and no man in the ranks brings comfort to the veteran, unless, perchance, Hather is here, and succours his shattered friend. Whomsoever Hather once thinks worthy of his duteous love, that man he attends continually with even zeal, constant to his purpose, and fearing to break his early ties. He also often pays fit rewards to those that have deserved well in war, and fosters their courage; he bestows dignities on the brave, and honours his famous friends with gifts. Free with his wealth, he is fain to increase with bounty the brightness of his name, and to surpass many of the mighty. Nor is he less in war: his strength is equal to his goodness; he is swift in the fray, slow to waver, ready to give battle; and he cannot turn his back when the foe bears him hard. But for me, if I remember right, fate appointed at my birth that wars I should follow and in war I should die, that I should mix in broils, watch in arms, and pass a life of bloodshed. I was a man of camps, and rested not; hating peace, I grew old under thy standard, O War-god, in utmost peril; conquering fear, I thought it comely to fight, shameful to loiter, and noble to kill and kill again, to be for ever slaughtering! Oft have I seen the stern kings meet in war, seen shield and helmet bruised, and the fields redden with blood, and the cuirass broken by the spear-point, and the corselets all around giving at the thrust of the steel, and the wild beasts battening on the unburied soldier. Here, as it chanced, one that attempted a mighty thing, a strong-handed warrior, fighting against the press of the foe, smote through the mail that covered my head, pierced my helmet, and plunged his blade into my crest. This sword also hath often been driven by my right hand in war, and, once unsheathed, hath cleft the skin and bitten into the skull."

Hather, in answer, sang as follows:

"Whence comest thou, who art used to write the poems of thy land, leaning thy wavering steps on a frail staff? Or whither dost thou speed, who art the readiest bard of the Danish muse? All the glory of thy great strength is faded and lost; the hue is banished from thy face, the joy is gone out of thy soul; the voice has left thy throat, and is hoarse and dull; thy body has lost its former stature; the decay of death begins, and has wasted thy features and thy force. As a ship wearies, buffeted by continual billows, even so old age, gendered by a long course of years, brings forth bitter death; and the life falls when its strength is done, and suffers the loss of its ancient lot. Famous old man, who has told thee that thou mayst not duly follow the sports of youth, or fling balls, or bite and eat the nut? I think it were better for thee now to sell thy sword, and buy a carriage wherein to ride often, or a horse easy on the bit, or at the same cost to purchase a light cart. It will be more fitting for beasts of burden to carry weak old men, when their steps fail them; the wheel, driving round and round, serves for him whose foot totters feebly. But if perchance thou art loth to sell the useless steel, thy sword, if it be not for sale, shall be taken from thee and shall slay thee."

Starkad answered: "Wretch, thy glib lips scatter idle words, unfit for the ears of the good. Why seek the gifts to reward that guidance, which thou shouldst have offered for naught? Surely I will walk afoot, and will not basely give up my sword and buy the help of a stranger; nature has given me the right of passage, and hath bidden me trust in my own feet. Why mock and jeer with insolent speech at him whom thou shouldst have offered to guide upon his way? Why give to dishonour my deeds of old, which deserve the memorial of fame? Why requite my service with reproach? Why pursue with jeers the old man mighty in battle, and put to shame my unsurpassed honours and illustrious deeds, belittling my glories and girding at my prowess? For what valour of thine dost thou demand my sword, which thy strength does not deserve? It befits not the right hand or the unwarlike side of a herdsman, who is wont to make his peasant-music on the pipe, to see to the flock, to keep the herds in the fields. Surely among the henchmen, close to the greasy pot, thou dippest thy crust in the bubbles of the foaming pan, drenching a meagre slice in the rich, oily fat, and stealthily, with thirsty finger, licking the warm juice; more skilled to spread thy accustomed cloak on the ashes, to sleep on the hearth, and slumber all day long, and go busily about the work of the reeking kitchen, than to make the brave blood flow with thy shafts in war. Men think thee a hater of the light and a lover of a filthy hole, a wretched slave of thy belly, like a whelp who licks the coarse grain, husk and all.

"By heaven, thou didst not try to rob me of my sword when thrice at great peril I fought (for?) the son of Ole. For truly, in that array, my hand either broke the sword or shattered the obstacle, so heavy was the blow of the smiter. What of the day when I first taught them to run with wood-shod feet over the shore of the Kurlanders, and the path bestrewn with countless points? For when I was going to the fields studded with calthrops, I guarded their wounded feet with clogs below them. After this I slew Hame, who fought me mightily; and soon, with the captain Rin the son of Flebak, I crushed the Kurlanders, yea, or all the tribes Esthonia breeds, and thy peoples, O Semgala! Then I attacked the men of Tellemark, and took thence my head bloody with bruises, shattered with mallets, and smitten with the welded weapons. Here first I learnt how strong was the iron wrought on the anvil, or what valour the common people had. Also it was my doing that the Teutons were punished, when, in avenging my lord, I laid low over their cups thy sons, O Swerting, who were guilty of the wicked slaughter of Frode.

"Not less was the deed when, for the sake of a beloved maiden, I slew nine brethren in one fray;—witness the spot, which was consumed by the bowels that left me, and brings not forth the grain anew on its scorched sod. And soon, when Ker the captain made ready a war by sea, with a noble army we beat his serried ships. Then I put Waske to death, and punished the insolent smith by slashing his hinder parts; and with the sword I slew Wisin, who from the snowy rocks blunted the spears. Then I slew the four sons of Ler, and the champions of Permland; and then having taken the chief of the Irish race, I rifled the wealth of Dublin; and our courage shall ever remain manifest by the trophies of Bravalla. Why do I linger? Countless are the deeds of my bravery, and when I review the works of my hands I fail to number them to the full. The whole is greater than I can tell. My work is too great for fame, and speech serves not for my doings."

So sang Starkad. At last, when he found by their talk that Hather was the son of Hlenne, and saw that the youth was of illustrious birth, he offered him his throat to smite, bidding him not to shrink from punishing the slayer of his father. He promised him that if he did so he should possess the gold which he had himself received from Hlenne. And to enrage his heart more vehemently against him, he is said to have harangued him as follows:

"Moreover, Hather, I robbed thee of thy father Hlenne; requite me this, I pray, and strike down the old man who longs to die; aim at my throat with the avenging steel. For my soul chooses the service of a noble smiter, and shrinks to ask its doom at a coward's hand. Righteously may a man choose to forstall the ordinance of doom. What cannot be escaped it will be lawful also to anticipate. The fresh tree must be fostered, the old one hewn down. He is nature's instrument who destroys what is near its doom and strikes down what cannot stand. Death is best when it is sought: and when the end is loved, life is wearisome. Let not the troubles of age prolong a miserable lot."

So saying, he took money from his pouch and gave it him. But Hather, desiring as much to enjoy the gold as to accomplish vengeance for his father, promised that he would comply with his prayer, and would not refuse the reward. Starkad eagerly handed him the sword, and at once stooped his neck beneath it, counselling him not to do the smiter's work timidly, or use the sword like a woman; and telling him that if, when he had killed him, he could spring between the head and the trunk before the corpse fell, he would be rendered proof against arms. It is not known whether he said this in order to instruct his executioner or to punish him, for perhaps, as he leapt, the bulk of the huge body would have crushed him. So Hather smote sharply with the sword and hacked off the head of the old man. When the severed head struck the ground, it is said to have bitten the earth; thus the fury of the dying lips declared the fierceness of the soul. But the smiter, thinking that the promise hid some treachery, warily refrained from leaping. Had he done so rashly, perhaps he would have been crushed by the corpse as it fell, and have paid with his own life for the old man's murder. But he would not allow so great a champion to lie unsepulchred, and had his body buried in the field that is commonly called Rolung.

Now Omund, as I have heard, died most tranquilly, while peace was unbroken, leaving two sons and two daughters. The eldest of these, SIWARD, came to the throne by right of birth, while his brother Budle was still of tender years. At this time Gotar, King of the Swedes, conceived boundless love for one of the daughters of Omund, because of the report of her extraordinary beauty, and entrusted one Ebb, the son of Sibb, with the commission of asking for the maiden. Ebb did his work skilfully, and brought back the good news that the girl had consented. Nothing was now lacking to Gotar's wishes but the wedding; but, as he feared to hold this among strangers, he demanded that his betrothed should be sent to him in charge of Ebb, whom he had before used as envoy.

Ebb was crossing Halland with a very small escort, and went for a night's lodging to a country farm, where the dwellings of two brothers faced one another on the two sides of a river. Now these men used to receive folk hospitably and then murder them, but were skilful to hide their brigandage under a show of generosity. For they had hung on certain hidden chains, in a lofty part of the house, an oblong beam like a press, and furnished it with a steel point; they used to lower this in the night by letting down the fastenings, and cut off the heads of those that lay below. Many had they beheaded in this way with the hanging mass. So when Ebb and his men had been feasted abundantly, the servants laid them out a bed near the hearth, so that by the swing of the treacherous beam they might mow off their heads, which faced the fire. When they departed, Ebb, suspecting the contrivance slung overhead, told his men to feign slumber and shift their bodies, saying that it would be very wholesome for them to change their place.

Now among these were some who despised the orders which the others obeyed, and lay unmoved, each in the spot where he had chanced to lie down. Then towards the mirk of night the heavy hanging machine was set in motion by the doers of the treachery. Loosened from the knots of its fastening, it fell violently on the ground, and slew those beneath it. Thereupon those who had the charge of committing the crime brought in a light, that they might learn clearly what had happened, and saw that Ebb, on whose especial account they had undertaken the affair, had wisely been equal to the danger. He straightway set on them and punished them with death; and also, after losing his men in the mutual slaughter, he happened to find a vessel, crossed a river full of blocks of ice, and announced to Gotar the result, not so much of his mission as of his mishap.

Gotar judged that this affair had been inspired by Siward, and prepared to avenge his wrongs by arms. Siward, defeated by him in Halland, retreated into Jutland, the enemy having taken his sister. Here he conquered the common people of the Sclavs, who ventured to fight without a leader; and he won as much honour from this victory as he had got disgrace by his flight. But a little afterwards, the men whom he had subdued when they were ungeneraled, found a general and defeated Siward in Funen. Several times he fought them in Jutland, but with ill-success. The result was that he lost both Skaane and Jutland, and only retained the middle of his realm without the head, like the fragments of some body that had been consumed away. His son Jarmerik (Eormunrec), with his child-sisters, fell into the hands of the enemy; one of these was sold to the Germans, the other to the Norwegians; for in old time marriages were matters of purchase. Thus the kingdom of the Danes, which had been enlarged with such valour, made famous by such ancestral honours, and enriched by so many conquests, fell, all by the sloth of one man, from the most illustrious fortune and prosperity into such disgrace that it paid the tribute which it used to exact. But Siward, too often defeated and guilty of shameful flights, could not endure, after that glorious past, to hold the troubled helm of state any longer in this shameful condition of his land; and, fearing that living longer might strip him of his last shred of glory, he hastened to win an honourable death in battle. For his soul could not forget his calamity, it was fain to cast off its sickness, and was racked with weariness of life. So much did he abhor the light of life in his longing to wipe out his shame. So he mustered his army for battle, and openly declared war with one Simon, who was governor of Skaane under Gotar. This war he pursued with stubborn rashness; he slew Simon, and ended his own life amid a great slaughter of his foes. Yet his country could not be freed from the burden of the tribute.

Jarmerik, meantime, with his foster-brother of the same age as himself, Gunn, was living in prison, in charge of Ismar, the King of the Sclavs. At last he was taken out and put to agriculture, doing the work of a peasant. So actively did he manage this matter that he was transferred and made master of the royal slaves. As he likewise did this business most uprightly, he was enrolled in the band of the king's retainers. Here he bore himself most pleasantly as courtiers use, and was soon taken into the number of the king's friends and obtained the first place in his intimacy; thus, on the strength of a series of great services, he passed from the lowest estate to the most distinguished height of honour. Also, loth to live a slack and enfeebled youth, he trained himself to the pursuits of war, enriching his natural gifts by diligence. All men loved Jarmerik, and only the queen mistrusted the young man's temper. A sudden report told them that the king's brother had died. Ismar, wishing to give his body a splendid funeral, prepared a banquet of royal bounty to increase the splendour of the obsequies.

But Jarmerik, who used at other times to look after the household affairs together with the queen, began to cast about for means of escape; for a chance seemed to be offered by the absence of the king. For he saw that even in the lap of riches he would be the wretched thrall of a king, and that he would draw, as it were, his very breath on sufferance and at the gift of another. Moreover, though he held the highest offices with the king, he thought that freedom was better than delights, and burned with a mighty desire to visit his country and learn his lineage. But, knowing that the queen had provided sufficient guards to see that no prisoner escaped, he saw that he must approach by craft where he could not arrive by force. So he plaited one of those baskets of rushes and withies, shaped like a man, with which countrymen used to scare the birds from the corn, and put a live dog in it; then he took off his own clothes, and dressed it in them, to give a more plausible likeness to a human being. Then he broke into the private treasury of the king, took out the money, and hid himself in places of which he alone knew.

Meantime Gunn, whom he had told to conceal the absence of his friend, took the basket into the palace and stirred up the dog to bark; and when the queen asked what this was, he answered that Jarmerik was out of his mind and howling. She, beholding the effigy, was deceived by the likeness, and ordered that the madman should be cast out of the house. Then Gunn took the effigy out and put it to bed, as though it were his distraught friend. But towards night he plied the watch bountifully with wine and festal mirth, cut off their heads as they slept, and set them at their groins, in order to make their slaying more shameful. The queen, roused by the din, and wishing to learn the reason of it, hastily rushed to the doors. But while she unwarily put forth her head, the sword of Gunn suddenly pierced her through. Feeling a mortal wound, she sank, turned her eyes on her murderer, and said, "Had it been granted me to live unscathed, no screen or treachery should have let thee leave this land unpunished." A flood of such threats against her slayer poured from her dying lips.

Then Jarmerik, with Gunn, the partner of his noble deed, secretly set fire to the tent wherein the king was celebrating with a banquet the obsequies of his brother; all the company were overcome with liquor. The fire filled the tent and spread all about; and some of them, shaking off the torpor of drink, took horse and pursued those who had endangered them. But the young men fled at first on the beasts they had taken; and at last, when these were exhausted with their long gallop, took to flight on foot. They were all but caught, when a river saved them. For they crossed a bridge, of which, in order to delay the pursuer, they first cut the timbers down to the middle, thus making it not only unequal to a burden, but ready to come down; then they retreated into a dense morass.

The Sclavs pressed on them hard and, not forseeing the danger, unwarily put the weight of their horses on the bridge; the flooring sank, and they were shaken off and flung into the river. But, as they swam up to the bank, they were met by Gunn and Jarmerik, and either drowned or slain. Thus the young men showed great cunning, and did a deed beyond their years, being more like sagacious old men than runaway slaves, and successfully achieving their shrewd design. When they reached the strand they seized a vessel chance threw in their way, and made for the deep. The barbarians who pursued them, tried, when they saw them sailing off, to bring them back by shouting promises after them that they should be kings if they returned; "for, by the public statute of the ancients, the succession was appointed to the slayers of the kings." As they retreated, their ears were long deafened by the Sclavs obstinately shouting their treacherous promises.

At this time BUDLE, the brother of Siward, was Regent over the Danes, who forced him to make over the kingdom to JARMERIK when he came; so that Budle fell from a king into a common man. At the same time Gotar charged Sibb with debauching his sister, and slew him. Sibb's kindred, much angered by his death, came wailing to Jarmerik, and promised to attack Gotar with him, in order to avenge their kinsman. They kept their promise well, for Jarmerik, having overthrown Gotar by their help, gained Sweden. Thus, holding the sovereignty of both nations, he was encouraged by his increased power to attack the Sclavs, forty of whom he took and hung with a wolf tied to each of them. This kind of punishment was assigned of old to those who slew their own kindred; but he chose to inflict it upon enemies, that all might see plainly, just from their fellowship with ruthless beasts, how grasping they had shown themselves towards the Danes.

When Jarmerik had conquered the country, he posted garrisons in all the fitting places, and departing thence, he made a slaughter of the Sembs and the Kurlanders, and many nations of the East. The Sclavs, thinking that this employment of the king gave them a chance of revolting, killed the governors whom he had appointed, and ravaged Denmark. Jarmerik, on his way back from roving, chanced to intercept their fleet, and dstroyed it, a deed which added honour to his roll of conquests. He also put their nobles to death in a way that one would weep to see; namely, by first passing thongs through their legs, and then tying them to the hoofs of savage bulls; then hounds set on them and dragged them into miry swamps. This deed took the edge off the valour of the Sclavs, and they obeyed the authority of the king in fear and trembling.

Jarmerik, enriched with great spoils, wished to provide a safe storehouse for his booty, and built on a lofty hill a treasure-house of marvellous handiwork. Gathering sods, he raised a mound, laying a mass of rocks for the foundation, and girt the lower part with a rampart, the centre with rooms, and the top with battlements. All round he posted a line of sentries without a break. Four huge gates gave free access on the four sides; and into this lordly mansion he heaped all his splendid riches. Having thus settled his affairs at home, he again turned his ambition abroad. He began to voyage, and speedily fought a naval battle with four brothers whom he met on the high seas, Hellespontines by race, and veteran rovers. After this battle had lasted three days, he ceased fighting, having bargained for their sister and half the tribute which they had imposed on those they had conquered.

After this, Bikk, the son of the King of the Livonians, escaped from the captivity in which he lay under these said brothers, and went to Jarmerik. But he did not forget his wrongs, Jarmerik having long before deprived him of his own brothers. He was received kindly by the king, in all whose secret counsels he soon came to have a notable voice; and, as soon as he found the king pliable to his advice in all things, he led him, when his counsel was asked, into the most abominable acts, and drove him to commit crimes and infamies. Thus he sought some device to injure the king by a feint of loyalty, and tried above all to steel him against his nearest of blood; attempting to accomplish the revenge of his brother by guile, since he could not by force. So it came to pass that the king embraced filthy vices instead of virtues, and made himself generally hated by the cruel deeds which he committed at the instance of his treacherous adviser. Even the Sclavs began to rise against him; and, as a means of quelling them, he captured their leaders, passed a rope through their shanks, and delivered them to be torn asunder by horses pulling different ways. So perished their chief men, punished for their stubbornness of spirit by having their bodies rent apart. This kept the Sclavs duly obedient in unbroken and steady subjugation.

Meantime, the sons of Jarmerik's sister, who had all been born and bred in Germany, took up arms, on the strength of their grandsire's title, against their uncle, contending that they had as good a right to the throne as he. The king demolished their strongholds in Germany with engines, blockaded or took several towns, and returned home with a bloodless victory. The Hellespontines came to meet him, proffering their sister for the promised marriage. After this had been celebrated, at Bikk's prompting he again went to Germany, took his nephews in war, and incontinently hanged them. He also got together the chief men under the pretence of a banquet and had them put to death in the same fashion.

Meantime, the king appointed Broder, his son by another marriage, to have charge over his stepmother, a duty which he fulfilled with full vigilance and integrity. But

Bikk accused this man to his father of incest; and, to conceal the falsehood of the charge, suborned witnesses against him. When the plea of the accusation had been fully declared, Broder could not bring any support for his defence, and his father bade his friends pass sentence upon the convicted man, thinking it less impious to commit the punishment proper for his son to the judgment of others. All thought that he deserved outlawry except Bikk, who did not shrink from giving a more terrible vote against his life, and declaring that the perpetrator of an infamous seduction ought to be punished with hanging. But lest any should think that this punishment was due to the cruelty of his father, Bikk judged that, when he had been put in the noose, the servants should hold him up on a beam put beneath him, so that, when weariness made them take their hands from the burden, they might be as good as guilty of the young man's death, and by their own fault exonerate the king from an unnatural murder. He also pretended that, unless the accused were punished, he would plot against his father's life. The adulteress Swanhild, he said, ought to suffer a shameful end, trampled under the hoofs of beasts.

The king yielded to Bikk; and, when his son was to be hanged, he made the bystanders hold him up by means of a plank, that he might not be choked. Thus his throat was only a little squeezed, the knot was harmless, and it was but a punishment in show. But the king had the queen tied very tight on the ground, and delivered her to be crushed under the hoofs of horses. The story goes that she was so beautiful, that even the beasts shrank from mangling limbs so lovely with their filthy feet. The king, divining that this proclaimed the innocence of his wife, began to repent of his error, and hastened to release the slandered lady. But meantime Bikk rushed up, declaring that when she was on her back she held off the beasts by awful charms, and could only be crushed if she lay on her face; for he knew that her beauty saved her. When the body of the queen was placed in this manner, the herd of beasts was driven upon it, and trod it down deep with their multitude of feet. Such was the end of Swanhild.

Meantime, the favourite dog of Broder came creeping to the king making a sort of moan, and seemed to bewail its master's punishment; and his hawk, when it was brought in, began to pluck out its breast-feathers with its beak. The king took its nakedness as an omen of his bereavement, to frustrate which he quickly sent men to take his son down from the noose: for he divined by the featherless bird that he would be childless unless he took good heed. Thus Broder was freed from death, and Bikk, fearing he would pay the penalty of an informer, went and told the men of the Hellespont that Swanhild had been abominably slain by her husband. When they set sail to avenge their sister, he came back to Jarmerik, and told him that the Hellespontines were preparing war.

The king thought that it would be safer to fight with walls than in the field, and retreated into the stronghold which he had built. To stand the siege, he filled its inner parts with stores, and its battlements with men-at-arms, Targets and shields flashing with gold were hung round and adorned the topmost circle of the building.

It happened that the Hellespontines, before sharing their booty, accused a great band of their men of embezzling, and put them to death. Having now destroyed so large a part of their forces by internecine slaughter, they thought that their strength was not equal to storming the palace, and consulted a sorceress named Gudrun. She brought it to pass that the defenders of the king's side were suddenly blinded and turned their arms against one another. When the Hellespontines saw this, they brought up a shield-mantlet, and seized the approaches of the gates. Then they tore up the posts, burst into the building, and hewed down the blinded ranks of the enemy. In this uproar Odin appeared, and, making for the thick of the ranks of the fighters, restored by his divine power to the Danes that vision which they had lost by sleights; for he ever cherished them with fatherly love. He instructed them to shower stones to batter the Hellespontines, who used spells to harden their bodies against weapons. Thus both companies slew one another and perished. Jarmerik lost both feet and both hands, and his trunk was rolled among the dead. BRODER, little fit for it, followed him as king.

The next king was SIWALD. His son SNIO took vigorously to roving in his father's old age, and not only preserved the fortunes of his country, but even restored them, lessened as they were, to their former estate. Likewise, when he came to the sovereignty, he crushed the insolence of the champions Eskil and Alkil, and by this conquest reunited to his country Skaane, which had been severed from the general jurisdiction of Denmark. At last he conceived a passion for the daughter of the King of the Goths; it was returned, and he sent secret messengers to seek a chance of meeting her. These men were intercepted by the father of the damsel and hanged: thus paying dearly for their rash mission. Snio, wishing to avenge their death, invaded Gothland. Its king met him with his forces, and the aforesaid champions challenged him to send strong men to fight. Snio laid down as condition of the duel, that each of the two kings should either lose his own empire or gain that of the other, according to the fortune of the champions, and that the kingdom of the conquered should be staked as the prize of the victory. The result was that the King of the Goths was beaten by reason of the ill-success of his defenders, and had to quit his kingdom for the Danes. Snio, learning that this king's daughter had been taken away at the instance of her father to wed the King of the Swedes. sent a man clad in ragged attire, who used to ask alms on the public roads, to try her mind. And while he lay, as beggars do, by the threshold, he chanced to see the queen, and whined in a weak voice, "Snio loves thee." She feigned not to have heard the sound that stole on her ears, and neither looked nor stepped back, but went on to the palace, then returned straightway, and said in a low whisper, which scarcely reached his ears, "I love him who loves me"; and having said this she walked away.

The beggar rejoiced that she had returned a word of love, and, as he sat on the next day at the gate, when the queen came up, he said, briefly as ever, "Wishes should have a tryst." Again she shrewdly caught his cunning speech, and passed on, dissembling wholly. A little later she passed by her questioner, and said that she would shortly go to Bocheror; for this was the spot to which she meant to flee. And when the beggar heard this, he insisted, with his wonted shrewd questions, upon being told a fitting time for the tryst. The woman was as cunning as he, and as little clear of speech, and named as quickly as she could the beginning of the winter.

Her train, who had caught a flying word of this love-message, took her great cleverness for the raving of utter folly. And when Snio had been told all this by the beggar, he contrived to carry the queen off in a vessel; for she got away under pretence of bathing, and took her husband's treasures. After this there were constant wars between Snio and the King of Sweden, whereof the issue was doubtful and the victory changeful; the one king seeking to regain his lawful, the other to keep his unlawful love.

At this time the yield of crops was ruined by most inclement weather, and a mighty dearth of corn befell. Victuals began to be scarce, and the commons were distressed with famine, so that the king, anxiously pondering how to relieve the hardness of the times, and seeing that the thirsty spent somewhat more than the hungry, introduced thrift among the people. He abolished drinking-bouts, and decreed that no drink should be prepared from grain, thinking that the bitter famine should be got rid of by prohibiting needless drinking, and that plentiful food could be levied as a loan on thirst.

Then a certain wanton slave of his belly, lamenting the prohibition against drink, adopted a deep kind of knavery, and found a new way to indulge his desires. He broke the public law of temperance by his own excess, contriving to get at what he loved by a device both cunning and absurd. For he sipped the forbidden liquor drop by drop, and so satisfied his longing to be tipsy. When he was summoned for this by the king, he declared that there was no stricter observer of sobriety than he, inasmuch as he mortified his longing to quaff deep by this device for moderate drinking. He persisted in the fault with which he was taxed, saying that he only sucked. At last he was also menaced with threats, and forbidden not only to drink, but even to sip; yet he could not check his habits. For in order to enjoy the unlawful thing in a lawful way, and not to have his throat subject to the command of another, he sopped morsels of bread in liquor, and fed on the pieces thus soaked with drink; tasting slowly, so as to prolong the desired debauch, and attaining, though in no unlawful manner, the forbidden measure of satiety.

Thus his stubborn and frantic intemperance risked his life, all for luxury; and, undeterred even by the threats of the king, he fortified his rash appetite to despise every peril. A second time he was summoned by the king on the charge of disobeying his regulation. Yet he did not even then cease to defend his act, but maintained that he had in no wise contravened the royal decree, and that the temperance prescribed by the ordinance had been in no way violated by that which allured him; especially as the thrift ordered in the law of plain living was so described, that it was apparently forbidden to drink liquor, but not to eat it. Then the king called heaven to witness, and swore by the general good, that if he ventured on any such thing hereafter he would punish him with death. But the man thought that death was not so bad as temperance, and that it was easier to quit life than luxury; and he again boiled the grain in water, and then fermented the liquor; whereupon, despairing of any further plea to excuse his appetite, he openly indulged in drink, and turned to his cups again unabashed. Giving up cunning for effrontery, he chose rather to await the punishment of the king than to turn sober. Therefore, when the king asked him why he had so often made free to use the forbidden thing, he said:

"O king, this craving is begotten, not so much of my thirst, as of my goodwill towards thee! For I remembered that the funeral rites of a king must be paid with a drinking-bout. Therefore, led by good judgment more than the desire to swill, I have, by mixing the forbidden liquid, taken care that the feast whereat thy obsequies are performed should not, by reason of the scarcity of corn, lack the due and customary drinking. Now I do not doubt that thou wilt perish of famine before the rest, and be the first to need a tomb; for thou hast passed this strange law of thrift in fear that thou wilt be thyself the first to lack food. Thou art thinking for thyself, and not for others, when thou bringest thyself to start such strange miserly ways."

This witty quibbling turned the anger of the king into shame; and when he saw that his ordinance for the general good came home in mockery to himself, he thought no more of the public profit, but revoked the edict, relaxing his purpose sooner than anger his subjects.

Whether it was that the soil had too little rain, or that it was too hard baked, the crops, as I have said, were slack, and the fields gave but little produce; so that the land lacked victual, and was worn with a weary famine. The stock of food began to fail, and no help was left to stave off hunger. Then, at the proposal of Agg and of Ebb, it was provided by a decree of the people that the old men and the tiny children should be slain; that all who were too young to bear arms should be taken out of the land, and only the strong should be vouchsafed their own country; that none but able-bodied soldiers and husbandmen should contiue to abide under their own roofs and in the houses of their fathers. When Agg and Ebb brought news of this to their mother Gambaruk, she saw that the authors of this infamous decree had found safety in crime. Condemning the decision of the assembly, she said that it was wrong to relieve distress by murder of kindred, and declared that a plan both more honourable and more desirable for the good of their souls and bodies would be, to preserve respect towards their parents and children, and choose by lot men who should quit the country. And if the lot fell on old men and weak, then the stronger should offer to go into exile in their place, and should of their own free will undertake to bear the burden of it for the feeble. But those men who had the heart to save their lives by crime and impiety, and to prosecute their parents and their children by so abominable a decree, did not deserve life; for they would be doing a work of cruelty and not of love. Finally, all those whose own lives were dearer to them than the love of their parents or their children, deserved but ill of their country. These words were reported to the assembly, and assented to by the vote of the majority. So the fortunes of all were staked upon the lot and those upon whom it fell were doomed to be banished. Thus those who had been loth to obey necessity of their own accord had now to accept the award of chance. So they sailed first to Bleking, and then, sailing past Moring, they came to anchor at Gothland; where, according to Paulus, they are said to have been prompted by the goddess Frigg to take the name of the Longobardi (Lombards), whose nation they afterwards founded. In the end they landed at Rügen, and, abandoning their ships, began to march overland. They crossed and wasted a great portion of the world; and at last, finding an abode in Italy, changed the ancient name of the nation for their own.

Meanwhile, the land of the Danes, where the tillers laboured less and less, and all traces of the furrows were covered with overgrowth, began to look like a forest. Almost stripped of its pleasant native turf, it bristled with the dense unshapely woods that grew up. Traces of this are yet seen in the aspect of its fields. What were once acres fertile in grain are now seen to be dotted with trunks of trees; and where of old the tillers turned the earth up deep and scattered the huge clods there has now sprung up a forest covering the fields, which still bear the tracks of ancient tillage. Had not these lands remained untilled and desolate with long overgrowth, the tenacious roots of trees could never have shared the soil of one and the same land with the furrows made by the plough. Moreover, the mounds which men laboriously built up of old on the level ground for the burial of the dead are now covered by a mass of woodland. Many piles of stones are also to be seen interspersed among the forest glades. These were once scattered over the whole country, but the peasants carefully gathered the boulders and piled them into a heap that they might not prevent furrows being cut in all directions; for they would sooner sacrifice a little of the land than find the whole of it stubborn. From this work, done by the toil of the peasants for the easier working of the fields, it is judged that the population in ancient times was greater than the present one, which is satisfied with small fields, and keeps its agriculture within narrower limits than those of the ancient tillage. Thus the present generation is amazed to behold that it has exchanged a soil which could once produce grain for one only fit to grow acorns, and the plough-handle and the cornstalks for a landscape studded with trees. Let this account of Snio, which I have put together as truly as I could, suffice.

Snio was succeeded by BIORN; and after him HARALD became sovereign. Harald's son GORM won no mean place of honour among the ancient generals of the Danes by his record of doughty deeds. For he ventured into fresh fields, preferring to practise his inherited valour, not in war, but in searching the secrets of nature; and, just as other kings are stirred by warlike ardour, so his heart thirsted to look into marvels; either what he could experience himself, or what were merely matters of report. And being desirous to go and see all things foreign and extraordinary, he thought that he must above all test a report which he had heard from the men of Thule concerning the abode of a certain Geirrod. For they boasted past belief of the mighty piles of treasure in that country, but said that the way was beset with peril, and hardly passable by mortal man. For those who had tried it declared that it was needful to sail over the ocean that goes round the lands, to leave the sun and stars behind, to journey down into chaos, and at last to pass into a land where no light was and where darkness reigned eternally.

But the warrior trampled down in his soul all fear of the dangers that beset him. Not that he desired booty, but glory; for he hoped for a great increase of renown if he ventured on a wholly unattempted quest. Three hundred men announced that they had the same desire as the king; and he resolved that Thorkill, who had brought the news, should be chosen to guide them on the journey, as he knew the ground and was versed in the approaches to that country. Thorkill did not refuse the task, and advised that, to meet the extraordinary fury of the sea they had to cross, strongly-made vessels should be built, fitted with many knotted cords and close-set nails, filled with great store of provision, and covered above with ox-hides to protect the inner spaces of the ships from the spray of the waves breaking in. Then they sailed off in only three galleys, each containing a hundred chosen men.

Now when they had come to Halogaland (Helgeland), they lost their favouring breezes, and were driven and tossed divers ways over the seas in perilous voyage. At last, in extreme want of food, and lacking even bread, they staved off hunger with a little pottage. Some days passed, and they heard the thunder of a storm brawling in the distance, as if it were deluging the rocks. By this perceiving that land was near, they bade a youth of great nimbleness climb to the masthead and look out; and he reported that a precipitous island was in sight. All were overjoyed, and gazed with thirsty eyes at the country at which he pointed, eagerly awaiting the refuge of the promised shore. At last they managed to reach it, and made their way out over the heights that blocked their way, along very steep paths, into the higher ground. Then Thorkill told them to take no more of the herds that were running about in numbers on the coast, than would serve once to appease their hunger. If they disobeyed, the guardian gods of the spot would not let them depart. But the seamen, more anxious to go on filling their bellies than to obey orders, postponed counsels of safety to the temptations of gluttony, and loaded the now emptied holds of their ships with the carcases of slaughtered cattle. These beasts were very easy to capture, because they gathered in amazement at the unwonted sight of men, their fears being made bold. On the following night monsters dashed down upon the shore, filled the forest with clamour, and beleaguered and beset the ships. One of them, huger than the rest, strode over the waters, armed with a mighty club. Coming close up to them, he bellowed out that they should never sail away till they had atoned for the crime they had committed in slaughtering the flock, and had made good the losses of the herd of the gods by giving up one man for each of their ships. Thorkill yielded to these threats; and, in order to preserve the safety of all by imperilling a few, singled out three men by lot and gave them up.

This done, a favouring wind took them, and they sailed to further Permland. It is a region of eternal cold, covered with very deep snows, and not sensible to the force even of the summer heats; full of pathless forests, not fertile in grain and haunted by beasts uncommon elsewhere. Its many rivers pour onwards in a hissing, foaming flood, because of the reefs imbedded in their channels.

Here Thorkill drew up his ships ashore, and bade them pitch their tents on the beach, declaring that they had come to a spot whence the passage to Geirrod would be short. Moreover, he forbade them to exchange any speech with those that came up to them, declaring that nothing enabled the monsters to injure strangers so much as uncivil words on their part: it would be therefore safer for his companions to keep silence; none but he, who had seen all the manners and customs of this nation before, could speak safely. As twilight approached, a man of extraordinary bigness greeted the sailors by their names, and came among them. All were aghast, but Thorkill told them to greet his arrival cheerfully, telling them that this was Gudmund, the brother of Geirrod, and the most faithful guardian in perils of all men who landed in that spot. When the man asked why all the rest thus kept silence, he answered that they were very unskilled in his language, and were ashamed to use a speech they did not know. Then Gudmund invited them to be his guests, and took them up in carriages. As they went forward, they saw a river which could be crossed by a bridge of gold. They wished to go over it, but Gudmund restrained them, telling them that by this channel nature had divided the world of men from the world of monsters, and that no mortal track might go further. Then they reached the dwelling of their guide; and here Thorkill took his companions apart and warned them to behave like men of good counsel amidst the divers temptations chance might throw in their way; to abstain from the food of the stranger, and nourish their bodies only on their own; and to seek a seat apart from the natives, and have no contact with any of them as they lay at meat. For if they partook of that food they would lose recollection of all things, and must live for ever in filthy intercourse amongst ghastly hordes of monsters. Likewise he told them that they must keep their hands off the servants and the cups of the people.

Round the table stood twelve noble sons of Gudmund, and as many daughters of notable beauty. When Gudmund saw that the king barely tasted what his servants brought, he reproached him with repulsing his kindness, and complained that it was a slight on the host. But Thorkill was not at a loss for a fitting excuse. He reminded him that men who took unaccustomed food often suffered from it seriously, and that the king was not ungrateful for the service rendered by another, but was merely taking care of his health, when he refreshed himself as he was wont, and furnished his supper with his own viands. An act, therefore, that was only done in the healthy desire to escape some bane, ought in no wise to be put down to scorn. Now when Gudmund saw that the temperance of his guest had baffled his treacherous preparations, he determined to sap their chastity, if he could not weaken their abstinence, and eagerly strained every nerve of his wit to enfeeble their self-control. For he offered the king his daughter in marriage, and promised the rest that they should have whatever women of his household they desired. Most of them inclined to his offer: but Thorkill by his healthy admonitions prevented them, as he had done before, from falling into temptation.

With wonderful management Thorkill divided his heed between the suspicious host and the delighted guests. Four of the Danes, to whom lust was more than their salvation, accepted the offer; the infection maddened them, distraught their wits, and blotted out their recollection: for they are said never to have been in their right mind after this. If these men had kept themselves within the rightful bounds of temperance, they would have equalled the glories of Hercules, surpassed with their spirit the bravery of giants, and been ennobled for ever by their wondrous services to their country.

Gudmund, stubborn to his purpose, and still spreading his nets, extolled the delights of his garden, and tried to lure the king thither to gather fruits, desiring to break down his constant wariness by the lust of the eye and the baits of the palate. The king, as before, was strengthened against these treacheries by Thorkill, and rejected this feint of kindly service; he excused himself from accepting it on the plea that he must hasten on his journey. Gudmund perceived that Thorkill was shrewder than he at every point; so, despairing to accomplish his treachery, he carried them all across the further side of the river, and let them finish their journey.

They went on; and saw, not far off, a gloomy, neglected town, looking more like a cloud exhaling vapour. Stakes interspersed among the battlements showed the severed heads of warriors and dogs of great ferocity were seen watching before the doors to guard the entrance. Thorkill threw them a horn smeared with fat to lick, and so, at slight cost, appeased their most furious rage. High up the gates lay open to enter, and they climbed to their level with ladders, entering with difficulty. Inside the town was crowded with murky and misshapen phantoms, and it was hard to say whether their shrieking figures were more ghastly to the eye or to the ear; everything was foul, and the reeking mire afflicted the nostrils of the visitors with its unbearable stench. Then they found the rocky dwelling which Geirrod was rumoured to inhabit for his palace. They resolved to visit its narrow and horrible ledge, but stayed their steps and halted in panic at the very entrance. Then Thorkill, seeing that they were of two minds, dispelled their hesitation to enter by manful encouragement, counselling them to restrain themselves, and not to touch any piece of gear in the house they were about to enter, albeit it seemed delightful to have or pleasant to behold; to keep their hearts as far from all covetousness as from fear; neither to desire what was pleasant to take, nor dread what was awful to look upon, though they should find themselves amidst abundance of both these things. If they did, their greedy hands would suddenly be bound fast, unable to tear themselves away from the thing they touched, and knotted up with it as by inextricable bonds. Moreover, they should enter in order, four by four.

Broder and Buchi (Buk?) were the first to show courage to attempt to enter the vile palace; Thorkill with the king followed them, and the rest advanced behind these in ordered ranks.

Inside, the house was seen to be ruinous throughout, and filled with a violent and abominable reek. And it also teemed with everything that could disgust the eye or the mind: the door-posts were begrimed with the soot of ages, the wall was plastered with filth, the roof was made up of spear-heads, the flooring was covered with snakes and bespattered with all manner of uncleanness. Such an unwonted sight struck terror into the strangers, and, over all, the acrid and incessant stench assailed their afflicted nostrils. Also bloodless phantasmal monsters huddled on the iron seats, and the places for sitting were railed off by leaden trellises; and hideous doorkeepers stood at watch on the thresholds. Some of these, armed with clubs lashed together, yelled, while others played a gruesome game, tossing a goat's hide from one to the other with mutual motion of goatish backs.

Here Thorkill again warned the men, and forbade them to stretch forth their covetous hands rashly to the forbidden things. Going on through the breach in the crag, they beheld an old man with his body pierced through, sitting, not far off, on a lofty seat facing the side of the rock that had been rent away. Moreover, three women, whose bodies were covered with tumours, and who seemed to have lost the strength of their back-bones, filled adjoining seats. Thorkill's companions were very curious; and he, who well knew the reason of the matter, told them that long ago the god Thor had been provoked by the insolence of the giants to drive red-hot irons through the vitals of Geirrod, who strove with him, and that the iron had slid further, torn up the mountain, and battered through its side; while the women had been stricken by the might of his thunderbolts, and had been punished (so he declared) for their attempt on the same deity, by having their bodies broken.

As the men were about to depart thence, there were disclosed to them seven butts hooped round with belts of gold; and from these hung circlets of silver entwined with them in manifold links. Near these was found the tusk of a strange beast, tipped at both ends with gold. Close by was a vast stag-horn, laboriously decked with choice and flashing gems, and this also did not lack chasing. Hard by was to be seen a very heavy bracelet. One man was kindled with an inordinate desire for this bracelet, and laid covetous hands upon the gold, not knowing that the glorious metal covered deadly mischief, and that a fatal bane lay hid under the shining spoil. A second also, unable to restrain his covetousness, reached out his quivering hands to the horn. A third, matching the confidence of the others, and having no control over his fingers, ventured to shoulder the tusk. The spoil seemed alike lovely to look upon and desirable to enjoy, for all that met the eye was fair and tempting to behold. But the bracelet suddenly took the form of a snake, and attacked him who was carrying it with its poisoned tooth; the horn lengthened out into a serpent, and took the life of the man who bore it; the tusk wrought itself into a sword, and plunged into the vitals of its bearer.

The rest dreaded the fate of perishing with their friends, and thought that the guiltless would be destroyed like the guilty; they durst not hope that even innocence would be safe. Then the side-door of another room showed them a narrow alcove: and a privy chamber with a yet richer treasure was revealed, wherein arms were laid out too great for those of human stature. Among these were seen a royal mantle, a handsome hat, and a belt marvellously wrought. Thorkill, struck with amazement at these things, gave rein to his covetousness, and cast off all his purposed self-restraint. He who so oft had trained others could not so much as conquer his own cravings. For he laid his hand upon the mantle, and his rash example tempted the rest to join in his enterprise of plunder. Thereupon the recess shook from its lowest foundations, and began suddenly to reel and totter. Straightway the women raised a shriek that the wicked robbers were being endured too long. Then they, who were before supposed to be half-dead or lifeless phantoms, seemed to obey the cries of the women, and, leaping suddenly up from their seats, attacked the strangers with furious onset. The other creatures bellowed hoarsely.

But Broder and Buchi fell to their old and familiar arts, and attacked the witches, who ran at them, with a shower of spears from every side; and with the missiles from their bows and slings they crushed the array of monsters. There could be no stronger or more successful way to repulse them; but only twenty men out of all the king's company were rescued by the intervention of this archery; the rest were torn in pieces by the monsters. The survivors returned to the river, and were ferried over by Gudmund, who entertained them at his house. Long and often as he besought them, he could not keep them back; so at last he gave them presents and let them go.

Buchi relaxed his watch upon himself; his self-control became unstrung, and he forsook the virtue in which he hitherto rejoiced. For he conceived an incurable love for one of the daughters of Gudmund, and embraced her; but he obtained a bride to his undoing, for soon his brain suddenly began to whirl, and he lost his recollection. Thus the hero who had subdued all the monsters and overcome all the perils was mastered by passion for one girl; his soul strayed far from temperance, and he lay under a wretched sensual yoke. For the sake of respect, he started to accompany the departing king; but as he was about to ford the river in his carriage, his wheels sank deep, he was caught up in the violent eddies and destroyed.

The king bewailed his friend's disaster and departed hastening on his voyage. This was at first prosperous, but afterwards he was tossed by bad weather; his men perished of hunger, and but few survived, so that he began to feel awe in his heart, and fell to making vows to heaven, thinking the gods alone could help him in his extreme need. At last the others besought sundry powers among the gods, and thought they ought to sacrifice to the majesty of divers deities; but the king, offering both vows and peace-offerings to Utgarda-Loki, obtained that fair season of weather for which he prayed.

Coming home, and feeling that he had passed through all these seas and toils, he thought it was time for his spirit, wearied with calamities, to withdraw from his labours. So he took a queen from Sweden, and exchanged his old pursuits for meditative leisure. His life was prolonged in the utmost peace and quietness; but when he had almost come to the end of his days, certain men persuaded him by likely arguments that souls were immortal; so that he was constantly turning over in his mind the questions, to what abode he was to fare when the breath left his limbs, or what reward was earned by zealous adoration of the gods.

While he was thus inclined, certain men who wished ill to Thorkill came and told Gorm that it was needful to consult the gods, and that assurance about so great a matter must be sought of the oracles of heaven, since it was too deep for human wit and hard for mortals to discover.

Therefore, they said, Utgarda-Loki must be appeased, and no man would accomplish this more fitly than Thorkill. Others, again, laid information against him as guilty of treachery and an enemy of the king's life. Thorkill, seeing himself doomed to extreme peril, demanded that his accusers should share his journey. Then they who had aspersed an innocent man saw that the peril they had designed against the life of another had recoiled upon themselves, and tried to take back their plan. But vainly did they pester the ears of the king; he forced them to sail under the command of Thorkill, and even upbraided them with cowardice. Thus, when a mischief is designed against another, it is commonly sure to strike home to its author. And when these men saw that they were constrained, and could not possibly avoid the peril, they covered their ship with ox-hides, and filled it with abundant store of provision.

In this ship they sailed away, and came to a sunless land, which knew not the stars, was void of daylight, and seemed to overshadow them with eternal night. Long they sailed under this strange sky; at last their timber fell short, and they lacked fuel; and, having no place to boil their meat in, they staved off their hunger with raw viands. But most of those who ate contracted extreme disease, being glutted with undigested food. For the unusual diet first made a faintness steal gradually upon their stomachs; then the infection spread further, and the malady reached the vital parts. Thus there was danger in either extreme, which made it hurtful not to eat, and perilous to indulge; for it was found both unsafe to feed and bad for them to abstain. Then, when they were beginning to be in utter despair, a gleam of unexpected help relieved them, even as the string breaks most easily when it is stretched tightest. For suddenly the weary men saw the twinkle of a fire at no great distance, and conceived a hope of prolonging their lives. Thorkill thought this fire a heaven-sent relief, and resolved to go and take some of it.

To be surer of getting back to his friends, Thorkill fastened a jewel upon the mast-head, to mark it by the gleam. When he got to the shore, his eyes fell on a cavern in a close defile, to which a narrow way led. Telling his companions to await him outside, he went in, and saw two men, swart and very huge, with horny noses, feeding their fire with any chance-given fuel. Moreover, the entrance was hideous, the door-posts were decayed, the walls grimy with mould, the roof filthy, and the floor swarming with snakes; all of which disgusted the eye as much as the mind. Then one of the giants greeted him, and said that he had begun a most difficult venture in his burning desire to visit a strange god, and his attempt to explore with curious search an untrodden region beyond the world. Yet he promised to tell Thorkill the paths of the journey he proposed to make, if he would deliver three true judgments in the form of as many sayings. Then said Thorkill: "In good truth, I do not remember ever to have seen a household with more uncomely noses; nor have I ever come to a spot where I had less mind to live." Also he said: "That, I think, is my best foot which can get out of this foremost."

The giant was pleased with the shrewdness of Thorkill, and praised his sayings, telling him that he must first travel to a grassless land which was veiled in deep darkness; but he must first voyage for four days, rowing incessantly, before he could reach his goal. There he could visit Utgarda-Loki, who had chosen hideous and grisly caves for his filthy dwelling. Thorkill was much aghast at being bidden to go on a voyage so long and hazardous; but his doubtful hopes prevailed over his present fears, and he asked for some live fuel. Then said the giant: "If thou needest fire, thou must deliver three more judgments in like sayings." Then said Thorkill: "Good counsel is to be obeyed, though a mean fellow gave it." Likewise: "I have gone so far in rashness, that if I can get back I shall owe my safety to none but my own legs." And again: "Were I free to retreat this moment, I would take good care never to come back."

Thereupon Thorkill took the fire along to his companions; and finding a kindly wind, landed on the fourth day at the appointed harbour. With his crew he entered a land where an aspect of unbroken night checked the vicissitude of light and darkness. He could hardly see before him, but beheld a rock of enormous size. Wishing to explore it, he told his companions, who were standing posted at the door, to strike a fire from flints as a timely safeguard against demons, and kindle it in the entrance. Then he made others bear a light before him, and stooped his body through the narrow jaws of the cavern, where he beheld a number of iron seats among a swarm of gliding serpents. Next there met his eye a sluggish mass of water gently flowing over a sandy bottom. He crossed this, and approached a cavern which sloped somewhat more steeply. Again, after this, a foul and gloomy room was disclosed to the visitors, wherein they saw Utgarda-Loki, laden hand and foot with enormous chains. Each of his reeking hairs was as large and stiff as a spear of cornel. Thorkill (his companions lending a hand), in order that his deeds might gain more credit, plucked one of these from the chin of Utgarda-Loki, who suffered it. Straightway such a noisome smell reached the bystanders, that they could not breathe without stopping their noses with their mantles. They could scarcely make their way out, and were bespattered by the snakes which darted at them on every side.

Only five of Thorkill's company embarked with their captain: the poison killed the rest. The demons hung furiously over them, and cast their poisonous slaver from every side upon the men below them. But the sailors sheltered themselves with their hides, and cast back the venom that fell upon them. One man by chance at this point wished to peep out; the poison touched his head, which was taken off his neck as if it had been severed with a sword. Another put his eyes out of their shelter, and when he brought them back under it they were blinded. Another thrust forth his hand while unfolding his covering, and, when he withdrew his arm, it was withered by the virulence of the same slaver. They besought their deities to be kinder to them; vainly, until Thorkill prayed to the god of the universe, and poured forth unto him libations as well as prayers; and thus, presently finding the sky even as before and the elements clear, he made a fair voyage.

And now they seemed to behold another world, and the way towards the life of man. At last Thorkill landed in Germany, which had then been admitted to Christianity; and among its people he began to learn how to worship God. His band of men were almost destroyed, because of the dreadful air they had breathed, and he returned to his country accompanied by two men only, who had escaped the worst. But the corrupt matter which smeared his face so disguised his person and original features that not even his friends knew him. But when he wiped off the filth, he made himself recognizable by those who saw him, and inspired the king with the greatest eagerness to hear about his quest. But the detraction of his rivals was not yet silenced; and some pretended that the king would die suddenly if he learnt Thorkill's tidings. The king was the more disposed to credit this saying, because he was already credulous by reason of a dream which falsely prophesied the same thing. Men were therefore hired by the king's command to slay Thorkill in the night. But somehow he got wind of it, left his bed unknown to all, and put a heavy log in his place. By this he baffled the treacherous device of the king, for the hirelings smote only the stock.

On the morrow Thorkill went up to the king as he sat at meat, and said: "I forgive thy cruelty and pardon thy error, in that thou hast decreed punishment, and not thanks, to him who brings good tidings of his errand. For thy sake I have devoted my life to all these afflictions, and battered it in all these perils; I hoped that thou wouldst requite my services with much gratitude; and behold! I have found thee, and thee alone, punish my valour sharpliest. But I forbear all vengeance, and am satisfied with the shame within thy heart—if, after all, any shame visits the thankless—as expiation for this wrongdoing towards me. I have a right to surmise that thou art worse than all demons in fury, and all beasts in cruelty, if, after escaping the snares of all these monsters, I have failed to be safe from thine."

The king desired to learn everything from Thorkill's own lips; and, thinking it hard to escape destiny, bade him relate what had happened in due order. He listened eagerly to his recital of everything, till at last, when his own god was named, he could not endure him to be unfavourably judged. For he could not bear to hear Utgarda-Loki reproached with filthiness, and so resented his shameful misfortunes, that his very life could not brook such words, and he yielded it up in the midst of Thorkill's narrative. Thus, whilst he was so zealous in the worship of a false god, he came to find where the true prison of sorrows really was. Moreover, the reek of the hair, which Thorkill plucked from the locks of the giant to testify to the greatness of his own deeds, was exhaled upon the bystanders, so that many perished of it.

After the death of Gorm, Gotrik his son came to the throne. He was notable not only for prowess but for generosity, and none can say whether his courage or his compassion was the greater. He so chastened his harshness with mercy, that he seemed to counterweigh the one with the other. At this time Gaut, the King of Norway, was visited by Ber (Biorn?) and Ref, men of Thule. Gaut treated Ref with attention and friendship, and presented him with a heavy bracelet.

One of the courtiers, when he saw this, praised the greatness of the gift over-zealously, and declared that no one was equal to King Gaut in kindness. But Ref, though he owed thanks for the benefit, could not approve the inflated words of this extravagant praiser, and said that Gotrik was more generous than Gaut. Wishing to crush the empty boast of the flatterer, he chose rather to bear witness to the generosity of the absent than tickle with lies the vanity of his benefactor who was present. For another thing, he thought it somewhat more desirable to be charged with ingratitude than to support with his assent such idle and boastful praise, and also to move the king by the solemn truth than to beguile him with lying flatteries. But Ulf persisted not only in stubbornly repeating his praises of the king, but in bringing them to the proof; and proposed their gainsayer a wager.

With his consent Ref went to Denmark, and found Gotrik seated in state, and dealing out the pay to his soldiers. When the king asked him who he was, he said that his name was "Fox-cub." The answer filled some with mirth and some with marvel, and Gotrik said, "Yea, and it is fitting that a fox should catch his prey in his mouth." And thereupon he drew a bracelet from his arm, called the man to him, and put it between his lips. Straightway Ref put it upon his arm, which he displayed to them all adorned with gold, but the other arm he kept hidden as lacking ornament; for which shrewdness he received a gift equal to the first from that hand of matchless generosity. At this he was overjoyed, not so much because the reward was great, as because he had won his contention. And when the king learnt from him about the wager he had laid, he rejoiced that he had been lavish to him more by accident than of set purpose, and declared that he got more pleasure from the giving than the receiver from the gift. So Ref returned to Norway and slew his opponent, who refused to pay the wager. Then he took the daughter of Gaut captive, and brought her to Gotrik for his own.

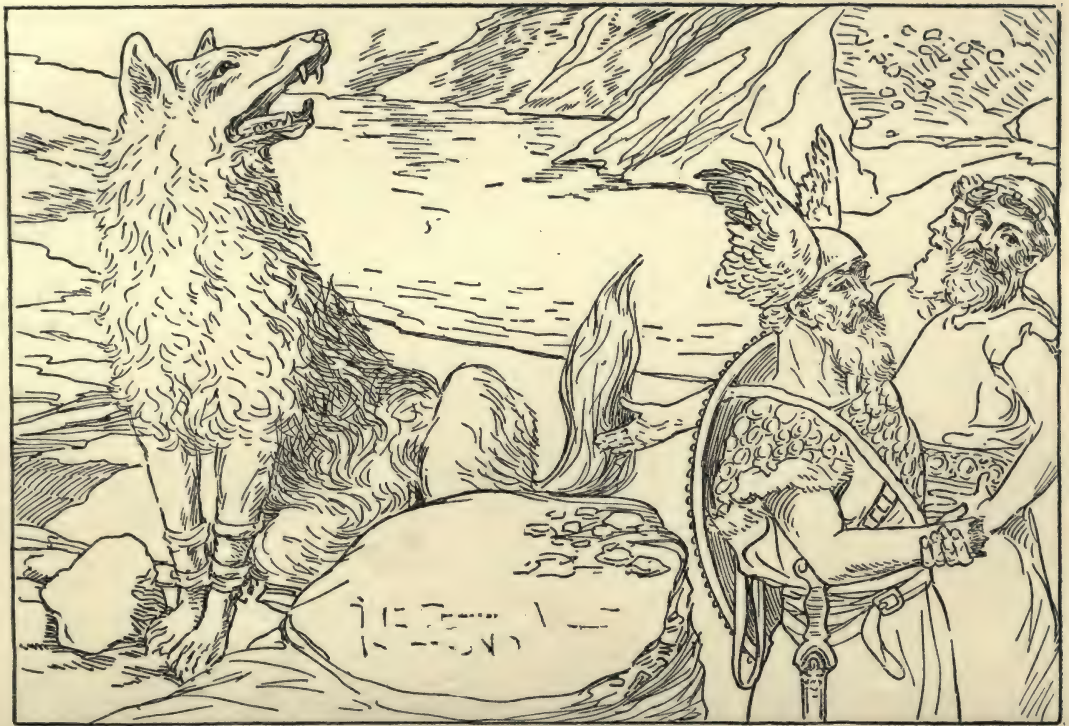
Gotrik, who is also called Godefride, carried his arms against foreigners, and increased his strength and glory by his successful generalship. Among his memorable deeds were the terms of tribute he imposed upon the Saxons; namely, that whenever a change of kings occurred among the Danes, their princes should devote a hundred snow-white horses to the new king on his accession. But if the Saxons should receive a new chief upon a change in the succession, this chief was likewise to pay the aforesaid tribute obediently, and bow at the outset of his power to the sovereign majesty of Denmark; thereby acknowledging the supremacy of our nation, and solemnly confessing his own subjection. Nor was it enough for Gotrik to subjugate Germany: he appointed Ref on a mission to try the strength of Sweden. The Swedes feared to slay him with open violence, but ventured to act like bandits, and killed him, as he slept, with the blow of a stone. For, hanging a millstone above him, they cut its fastenings, and let it drop upon his neck as he lay beneath. To expiate this crime it was decreed that each of the ringleaders should pay twelve golden talents, while each of the common people should pay Gotrik one ounce. Men called this "the Fox-cub's tribute." (Refsgild).

Meanwhile it befell that Karl, King of the Franks, crushed Germany in war, and forced it not only to embrace the worship of Christianity, but also to obey his authority. When Gotrik heard of this, he attacked the nations bordering on the Elbe, and attempted to regain under his sway as of old the realm of Saxony, which eagerly accepted the yoke of Karl, and preferred the Roman to the Danish arms. Karl had at this time withdrawn his victorious camp beyond the Rhine, and therefore forbore to engage the stranger enemy, being prevented by the intervening river. But when he was intending to cross once more to subdue the power of Gotrik, he was summoned by Leo the Pope of the Romans to defend the city.

Obeying this command, Karl intrusted his son Pepin with the conduct of the war aganst Gotrik; so that while he himself was working against a distant foe, Pepin might manage the conflict he had undertaken with his neighbour. For Karl was distracted by two anxieties, and had to furnish sufficient out of a scanty band to meet both of them. Meanwhile Gotrik won a glorious victory over the Saxons. Then gathering new strength, and mustering a larger body of forces, he resolved to avenge the wrong he had suffered in losing his sovereignty, not only upon the Saxons, but upon the whole people of Germany. He began by subduing Friesland with his fleet.

This province lies very low, and whenever the fury of the ocean bursts the dykes that bar its waves, it is wont to receive the whole mass of the deluge over its open plains. On this country Gotrik imposed a kind of tribute, which was not so much harsh as strange. I will briefly relate its terms and the manner of it. First, a building was arranged, two hundred and forty feet in length, and divided into twelve spaces; each of these stretching over an interval of twenty feet, and thus making together, when the whole room was exhausted, the aforesaid total. Now at the upper end of this building sat the king's treasurer, and in a line with him at its further end was displayed a round shield. When the Frisians came to pay tribute, they used to cast their coins one by one into the hollow of this shield; but only those coins which struck the ear of the distant toll-gatherer with a distinct clang were chosen by him, as he counted, to be reckoned among the royal tribute. The result was that the collector only reckoned that money towards the treasury of which his distant ear caught the sound as it fell. But that of which the sound was duller, and which fell out of his earshot, was received indeed into the treasury, but did not count as any increase to the sum paid. Now many coins that were cast in struck with no audible loudness whatever on the collector's ear, so that men who came to pay their appointed toll sometimes squandered much of their money in useless tribute. Karl is said to have freed them afterwards from the burden of this tax. After Gotrik had crossed

Friesland, and Karl had now come back from Rome, Gotrik determined to swoop down upon the further districts of Germany, but was treacherously attacked by one of his own servants, and perished at home by the sword of a traitor. When Karl heard this, he leapt up overjoyed, declaring that nothing more delightful had ever fallen to his lot than this happy chance.



BOOK NINE.

AFTER Gotrik's death reigned his son OLAF; who, desirous to avenge his father, did not hesitate to involve his country in civil wars, putting patriotism after private inclination. When he perished, his body was put in a barrow, famous for the name of Olaf, which was built up close by Leire.

He was succeeded by HEMMING, of whom I have found no deed worthy of record, save that he made a sworn peace with Kaiser Ludwig; and yet, perhaps, envious antiquity hides many notable deeds of his time, albeit they were then famous.

After these men there came to the throne, backed by the Skanians and Zealanders, SIWARD, surnamed RING. He was the son, born long ago, of the chief of Norway who bore the same name, by Gotrik's daughter. Now Ring, cousin of Siward, and also a grandson of Gotrik, was master of Jutland. Thus the power of the single kingdom was divided; and, as though its two parts were contemptible for their smallness, foreigners began not only to despise but to attack it. These Siward assailed with greater hatred than he did his rival for the throne; and, preferring wars abroad to wars at home, he stubbornly defended his country against dangers for five years; for he chose to put up with a trouble at home that he might the more easily cure one which came from abroad. Wherefore Ring (desiring his) command, seized the opportunity, tried to transfer the whole sovereignty to himself, and did not hesitate to injure in his own land the man who was watching over it without; for he attacked the provinces in the possession of Siward, which was an ungrateful requital for the defence of their common country. Therefore, some of the Zealanders who were more zealous for Siward, in order to show him firmer loyalty in his absence, proclaimed his son Ragnar as king, when he was scarcely dragged out of his cradle. Not but what they knew he was too young to govern; yet they hoped that such a gage would serve to rouse their sluggish allies against Ring. But, when Ring heard that Siward had meantime returned from his expedition, he attacked the Zealanders with a large force, and proclaimed that they should perish by the sword if they did not surrender; but the Zealanders, who were bidden to choose between shame and peril, were so few that they distrusted their strength, and requested a truce to consider the matter. It was granted; but, since it did not seem open to them to seek the favour of Siward, nor honourable to embrace that of Ring, they wavered long in perplexity between fear and shame. In this plight even the old were at a loss for counsel; but Ragnar, who chanced to be present at the assembly, said: "The short bow shoots its shaft suddenly. Though it may seem the hardihood of a boy that I venture to forestall the speech of the elders, yet I pray you to pardon my errors, and be indulgent to my unripe words. Yet the counsellor of wisdom is not to be spurned, though he seem contemptible; for the teaching of profitable things should be drunk in with an open mind. Now it is shameful that we should be branded as deserters and runaways, but it is just as foolhardy to venture above our strength; and thus there is proved to be equal blame either way. We must, then, pretend to go over to the enemy, but, when a chance comes in our way, we must desert him betimes. It will thus be better to forestall the wrath of our foe by feigned obedience than, by refusing it, to give him a weapon wherewith to attack us yet more harshly; for if we decline the sway of the stronger, are we not simply turning his arms against our own throat? Intricate devices are often the best nurse of craft. You need cunning to trap a fox." By this sound counsel he dispelled the wavering of his countrymen, and strengthened the camp of the enemy to its own hurt.

The assembly, marvelling at the eloquence as much as at the wit of one so young, gladly embraced a proposal of such genius, which they thought excellent beyond his years. Nor were the old men ashamed to obey the bidding of a boy when they lacked counsel themselves; for, though it came from one of tender years, it was full, notwithstanding, of weighty and sound instruction. But they feared to expose their adviser to immediate peril, and sent him over to Norway to be brought up. Soon afterwards, Siward joined battle with Ring and attacked him. He slew Ring, but himself received an incurable wound, of which he died a few days afterwards.

He was succeeded on the throne by RAGNAR. At this time Fro (Frey?), the King of Sweden, after slaying Siward, the King of the Norwegians, put the wives of Siward's kinsfolk in bonds in a brothel, and delivered them to public outrage. When Ragnar heard of this, he went to Norway to avenge his grandfather. As he came, many of the matrons, who had either suffered insult to their persons or feared imminent peril to their chastity, hastened eagerly to his camp in male attire, declaring that they would prefer death to outrage. Nor did Ragnar, who was to punish this reproach upon the women, scorn to use against the author of the infamy the help of those whose shame he had come to avenge. Among them was Ladgerda, a skilled amazon, who, though a maiden, had the courage of a man, and fought in front among the bravest with her hair loose over her shoulders. All marvelled at her matchless deeds, for her locks flying down her back betrayed that she was a woman.

Ragnar, when he had justly cut down the murderer of his grandfather, asked many questions of his fellow-soldiers concerning the maiden whom he had seen so forward in the fray, and declared that he had gained the victory by the might of one woman. Learning that she was of noble birth among the barbarians, he steadfastly wooed her by means of messengers. She spurned his mission in her heart, but feigned compliance. Giving false answers, she made her panting wooer confident that he would gain his desires; but ordered that a bear and a dog should be set at the porch of her dwelling, thinking to guard her own room against all the ardour of a lover by means of the beasts that blocked the way. Ragnar, comforted by the good news, embarked, crossed the sea, and, telling his men to stop in Gaulardale, as the valley is called, went to the dwelling of the maiden alone. Here the beasts met him, and he thrust one through with a spear, and caught the other by the throat, wrung its neck, and choked it. Thus he had the maiden as the prize of the peril he had overcome. By this marriage he had two daughters, whose names have not come down to us, and a son Fridleif. Then he lived three years at peace

The Jutlanders, a presumptuous race, thinking that because of his recent marriage he would never return, took the Skanians into alliance, and tried to attack the Zealanders, who preserved the most zealous and affectionate loyalty towards Ragnar. He, when he heard of it, equipped thirty ships, and, the winds favouring his voyage, crushed the Skanians, who ventured to fight, near the stead of Whiteby, and when the winter was over he fought successfully with the Jutlanders who dwelt near the Liim-fjord in that region. A third and a fourth time he conquered the Skanians and the Hallanders triumphantly.

Afterwards, changing his love, and desiring Thora, the daughter of the King Herodd, to wife, Ragnar divorced himself from Ladgerda; for he thought ill of her trustworthiness, remembering that she had long ago set the most savage beasts to destroy him. Meantime Herodd, the King of the Swedes, happening to go and hunt in the woods, brought home some snakes, found by his escort, for his daughter to rear. She speedily obeyed the instructions of her father, and endured to rear a race of adders with her maiden hands. Moreover, she took care that they should daily have a whole ox-carcase to gorge upon, not knowing that she was privately feeding and keeping up a public nuisance. The vipers grew up, and scorched the country-side with their pestilential breath. Whereupon the king, repenting of his sluggishness, proclaimed that whosoever removed the pest should have his daughter.

Many warriors were thereto attracted by courage as much as by desire; but all idly and perilously wasted their pains. Ragnar, learning from men who travelled to and fro how the matter stood, asked his nurse for a woolen mantle, and for some thigh-pieces that were very hairy, with which he could repel the snake-bites. He thought that he ought to use a dress stuffed with hair to protect himself, and also took one that was not unwieldy, that he might move nimbly. And when he had landed in Sweden, he deliberately plunged his body in water, while there was a frost falling, and, wetting his dress, to make it the less penetrable, he let the cold freeze it. Thus attired, he took leave of his companions, exhorted them to remain loyal to Fridleif, and went on to the palace alone. When he saw it, he tied his sword to his side, and lashed a spear to his right hand with a thong. As he went on, an enormous snake glided up and met him. Another, equally huge, crawled up, following in the trail of the first. They strove now to buffet the young man with the coils of their tails, and now to spit and belch their venom stubbornly upon him. Meantime the courtiers, betaking themselves to safer hiding, watched the struggle from afar like affrighted little girls. The king was stricken with equal fear, and fled, with a few followers, to a narrow shelter. But Ragnar, trusting in the hardness of his frozen dress, foiled the poisonous assaults not only with his arms, but with his attire, and, single-handed, in unweariable combat, stood up against the two gaping creatures, who stubbornly poured forth their venom upon him. For their teeth he repelled with his shield, their poison with his dress. At last he cast his spear, and drove it against the bodies of the brutes, who were attacking him hard. He pierced both their hearts, and his battle ended in victory.

After Ragnar had thus triumphed the king scanned his dress closely, and saw that he was rough and hairy; but, above all, he laughed at the shaggy lower portion of his garb, and chiefly the uncouth aspect of his breeches; so that he gave him in jest the nickname of Lodbrog. Also he invited him to feast with his friends, to refresh him after his labours. Ragnar said that he would first go back to the witnesses whom he had left behind. He set out and brought them back, splendidly attired for the coming feast. At last, when the banquet was over, he received the prize that was appointed for the victory. By her he begot two nobly-gifted sons, Radbard and Dunwat. These also had brothers—Siward, Biorn, Agnar, and Iwar.

Meanwhile, the Jutes and Skanians were kindled with an unquenchable fire of sedition; they disallowed the title of Ragnar, and gave a certain Harald the sovereign power. Ragnar sent envoys to Norway, and besought friendly assistance against these men; and Ladgerda, whose early love still flowed deep and steadfast, hastily sailed off with her husband and her son. She brought herself to offer a hundred and twenty ships to the man who had once put her away. And he, thinking himself destitute of all resources, took to borrowing help from folk of every age, crowded the strong and the feeble all together, and was not ashamed to insert some old men and boys among the wedges of the strong. So he first tried to crush the power of the Skanians in the field which in Latin is called Laneus (Woolly); here he had a hard fight with the rebels. Here, too, Iwar, who was in his seventh year, fought splendidly, and showed the strength of a man in the body of a boy. But Siward, while attacking the enemy face to face, fell forward upon the ground wounded. When his men saw this, it made them look round most anxiously for means of flight; and this brought low not only Siward, but almost the whole army on the side of Ragnar. But Ragnar by his manly deeds and exhortations comforted their amazed and sunken spirits, and, just when they were ready to be conquered, spurred them on to try and conquer.

Ladgerda, who had a matchless spirit though a delicate frame, covered by her splendid bravery the inclination of the soldiers to waver. For she made a sally about, and flew round to the rear of the enemy, taking them unawares, and thus turned the panic of her friends into the camp of the enemy. At last the lines of HARALD became slack, and HARALD himself was routed with a great slaughter of his men. LADGERDA, when she had gone home after the battle, murdered her husband. . . . in the night with a spear-head, which she had hid in her gown. Then she usurped the whole of his name and sovereignty; for this most presumptuous dame thought it pleasanter to rule without her husband than to share the throne with him.

Meantime, Siward was taken to a town in the neighbourhood, and gave himself to be tended by the doctors, who were reduced to the depths of despair. But while the huge wound baffled all the remedies they applied, a certain man of amazing size was seen to approach the litter of the sick man, and promised that Siward should straightway rejoice and be whole, if he would consecrate unto him the souls of all whom he should overcome in battle. Nor did he conceal his name, but said that he was called Rostar. Now Siward, when he saw that a great benefit could be got at the cost of a little promise, eagerly acceded to this request. Then the old man suddenly, by the help of his hand, touched and banished the livid spot, and suddenly scarred the wound over. At last he poured dust on his eyes and departed. Spots suddenly arose, and the dust, to the amaze of the beholders, seemed to become wonderfully like little snakes.

I should think that he who did this miracle wished to declare, by the manifest token of his eyes, that the young man was to be cruel in future, in order that the more visible part of his body might not lack some omen of his life that was to follow. When the old woman, who had the care of his draughts, saw him showing in his face signs of little snakes, she was seized with an extraordinary horror of the young man, and suddenly fell and swooned away. Hence it happened that Siward got the widespread name of Snake-Eye.

Meantime Thora, the bride of Ragnar, perished of a violent malady, which caused infinite trouble and distress to the husband, who dearly loved his wife. This distress, he thought, would be best dispelled by business, and he resolved to find solace in exercise and qualify his grief by toil. To banish his affliction and gain some comfort, he bent his thoughts to warfare, and decreed that every father of a family should devote to his service whichever of his children he thought most contemptible, or any slave of his who was lazy at his work or of doubtful fidelity. And albeit that this decree seemed little fitted for his purpose, he showed that the feeblest of the Danish race were better than the strongest men of other nations; and it did the young men great good, each of those chosen being eager to wipe off the reproach of indolence. Also he enacted that every piece of litigation should be referred to the judgment of twelve chosen elders, all ordinary methods of action being removed, the accuser being forbidden to charge, and the accused to defend. This law removed all chance of incurring litigation lightly. Thinking that there was thus sufficient provision made against false accusations by unscrupulous men, he lifted up his arms against Britain, and attacked and slew in battle its king, Hame, the father of Ella, who was a most noble youth. Then he killed the earls of Scotland and of Pictland, and of the isles that they call the Southern or Meridional (Sudr-eyar), and made his sons Siward and Radbard masters of the provinces, which were now without governors. He also deprived Norway of its chief by force, and commanded it to obey Fridleif, whom he also set over the Orkneys, from which he took their own earl.

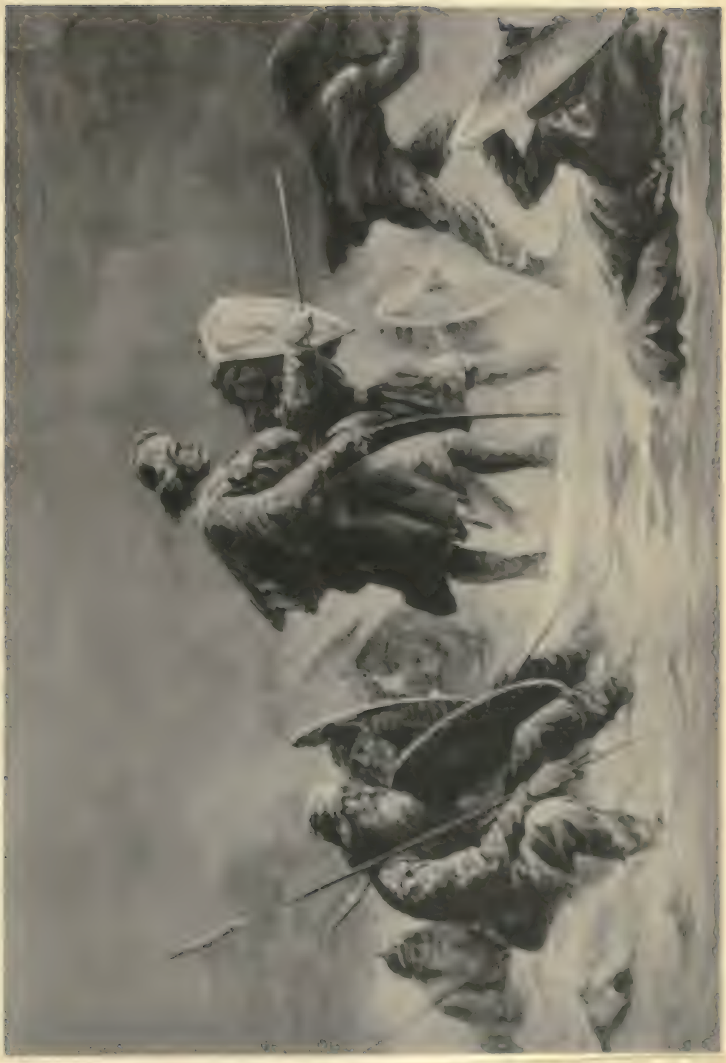
Meantime, some of the Danes who were most stubborn in their hatred against Ragnar were obstinately bent on rebellion. They rallied to the side of Harald, once an exile, and tried to raise the fallen fortunes of the tyrant. By this hardihood they raised up against the king the most virulent blasts of civil war, and entangled him in domestic perils when he was free from foreign troubles. Ragnar, setting out to check them with a fleet of the Danes who lived in the isles, crushed the army of the rebels, drove Harald, the leader of the conquered army, a fugitive to Germany, and forced him to resign unbashfully an honour which he had gained without scruple. Nor was he content simply to kill his prisoners: he preferred to torture them to death, so that those who could not be induced to forsake their disloyalty might not be so much as suffered to give up the ghost save under the most grievous punishment. Moreover, the estates of those who had deserted with Harald he distributed among those who were serving as his soldiers, thinking that the fathers would be worse punished by seeing the honour of their inheritance made over to the children whom they had rejected, while those whom they had loved better lost their patrimony. But even this did not sate his vengeance, and he further determined to attack Saxony, thinking it the refuge of his foes and the retreat of Harald. So, begging his sons to help him, he came on Karl, who happened then to be tarrying on those borders of his empire. Intercepting his sentries, he eluded the watch that was posted on guard. But while he thought that all the rest would therefore be easy and more open to his attacks, suddenly a woman who was a soothsayer, a kind of divine oracle or interpreter of the will of heaven, warned the king with a saving prophecy, and by her fortunate presage forestalled the mischief that impended, saying that the fleet of Siward had moored at the mouth of the river Seine. The emperor, heeding the warning, and understanding that the enemy was at hand, managed to engage with and stop the barbarians, who were thus pointed out to him. A battle was fought with Ragnar; but Karl did not succeed as happily in the field as he had got warning of the danger. And so that tireless conqueror of almost all Europe, who in his calm and complete career of victory had travelled over so great a portion of the world, now beheld his army, which had vanquished all these states and nations, turning its face from the field, and shattered by a handful from a single province.

Ragnar, after loading the Saxons with tribute, had sure tidings from Sweden of the death of Herodd, and also heard that his own sons, owing to the slander of Sorle, the king chosen in his stead, had been robbed of their inheritance. He besought the aid of the brothers Biorn, Fridleif, and Ragbard (for Ragnald, Hwitserk, and Erik, his sons by Swanloga, had not yet reached the age of bearing arms), and went to Sweden. Sorle met him with his army, and offered him the choice between a public conflict and a duel; and when Ragnar chose personal combat, he sent against him Starkad, a champion of approved daring, with his band of seven sons, to challenge and fight with him. Ragnar took his three sons to share the battle with him, engaged in the sight of both armies, and came out of the combat triumphant.

Biorn, having inflicted great slaughter on the foe without hurt to himself, gained from the strength of his sides, which were like iron, a perpetual name (Ironsides). This victory emboldened Ragnar to hope that he could overcome any peril, and he attacked and slew Sorle with the entire forces he was leading. He presented Biorn with the lordship of Sweden for his conspicuous bravery and service. Then for a little interval he rested from wars, and chanced to fall deeply in love with a certain woman. In order to find some means of approaching and winning her the more readily, he courted her father (Esbern) by showing him the most obliging and attentive kindness. He often invited him to banquets, and received him with lavish courtesy. When he came, he paid him the respect of rising, and when he sat, he honoured him with a set next to himself. He also often comforted him with gifts, and at times with the most kindly speech. The man saw that no merits of his own could be the cause of all this distinction, and casting over the matter every way in his mind, he perceived that the generosity of his monarch was caused by his love for his daughter, and that he coloured this lustful purpose with the name of kindness. But, that he might balk the cleverness of the lover, however well calculated, he had the girl watched all the more carefully that he saw her beset by secret aims and obstinate methods. But Ragnar, who was comforted by the surest tidings of her consent, went to the farmhouse in which she was kept, and fancying that love must find out a way, repaired alone to a certain peasant in a neighbouring lodging. In the morning he exchanged dress with the women, and went in female attire, and stood by his mistress as she was unwinding wool. Cunningly, to avoid betrayal, he set his hands to the work of a maiden, though they were little skilled in the art. In the night he embraced the maiden and gained his desire. When her time drew near, and the girl growing big, betrayed her outraged chastity, the father, not knowing to whom his daughter had given herself to be defiled, persisted in asking the girl herself who was the unknown seducer. She steadfastly affirmed that she had had no one to share her bed except her handmaid, and he made the affair over to the king to search into. He would not allow an innocent servant to be branded with an extraordinary charge, and was not ashamed to prove another's innocence by avowing his own guilt. By this generosity he partially removed the woman's reproach, and prevented an absurd report from being sown in the ears of the wicked. Also he added, that the son to be born of her was of his own line, and that he wished him to be named Ubbe. When this son had grown up somewhat, his wit, despite his tender years, equalled the discernment of manhood. For he took to loving his mother, since she had had converse with a noble bed, but cast off all respect for his father, because he had stooped to a union too lowly.

After this Ragnar prepared an expedition against the Hellespontines, and summoned an assembly of the Danes, promising that he would give the people most wholesome laws. He had enacted before that each father of a household should offer for service that one among his sons whom he esteemed least; but now he enacted that each should arm the son who was stoutest of hand or of most approved loyalty. Thereon, taking all the sons he had by Thora, in addition to Ubbe, he attacked, crushed in sundry campaigns, and subdued the Hellespont with its king Dia. At last he involved the same king in disaster after disaster, and slew him. Dia's sons, Dia and Daxo, who had before married the daughters of the Russian king, begged forces from their father-in-law, and rushed with most ardent courage to the work of avenging their father. But Ragnar, when he saw their boundless army, distrusted his own forces; and he put brazen horses on wheels that could be drawn easily, took them round on carriages that would turn, and ordered that they should be driven with the utmost force against the thickest ranks of the enemy. This device served so well to break the line of the foe, that the Danes' hope of conquest seemed to lie more in the engine than in the soldiers: for its insupportable weight overwhelmed whatever it struck. Thus one of the leaders was killed, while one made off in flight, and the whole army of the area of the Hellespont retreated. The Scythians, also, who were closely related by blood to Daxo on the mother's side, are said to have been crushed in the same disaster. Their province was made over to Hwitserk, and the king of the Russians, trusting little in his own strength, hastened to fly out of the reach of the terrible arms of Ragnar.

Now Ragnar had spent almost five years in sea-roving, and had quickly compelled all other nations to submit; but he found the Perms in open defiance of his sovereignty. He had just conquered them, but their loyalty was weak. When they heard that he had come they cast spells upon the sky, stirred up the clouds, and drove them into most furious storms. This for some time prevented the Danes from voyaging, and caused their supply of food to fail. Then, again, the storm suddenly abated, and now they were scorched by the most fervent and burning heat; nor was this plague any easier to bear than the great and violent cold had been. Thus the mischievous excess in both directions affected their bodies alternately, and injured them by an immoderate increase first of cold and then of heat. Moreover, dysentery killed most of them. So the mass of the Danes, being pent in by the dangerous state of the weather, perished of the bodily plague that arose on every side. And when Ragnar saw that he was hindered, not so much by a natural as by a factitious tempest, he held on his voyage as best he could, and got to the country of the Kurlanders and Sembs, who paid zealous honour to his might and majesty, as if he were the most revered of conquerors. This service enraged the king all the more against the arro-



RAGNAR'S PERIL IN PERMLAND.

(From the Painting by E. Simpson.)

RAGNAR was a mighty Norwegian king who continued his victories until he had brought all the neighboring nations to acknowledge his power if not to concede his sovereignty. The Perms alone refused to humble themselves, but being unable to resist Ragnar on the field of battle, they contrived to decoy him away from his ships, and by retreating led him so far into the country during mid-winter that his army suffered incredible hardships, and was almost totally destroyed by the cold.

gance of the men of Permland, and he attempted to avenge his slighted dignity by a sudden attack. Their king, whose name is not known, was struck with panic at such a sudden invasion of the enemy, and at the same time had no heart to join battle with them; and fled to Matul, the prince of Finmark. He, trusting in the great skill of his archers, harassed with impunity the army of Ragnar, which was wintering in Permland. For the Finns, who are wont to glide on slippery timbers (snow-skates), scud along at whatever pace they will, and are considered to be able to approach or depart very quickly; for as soon as they have damaged the enemy they fly away as speedily as they approach, nor is the retreat they make quicker than their charge. Thus their vehicles and their bodies are so nimble that they acquire the utmost expertness both in advance and flight.

Ragnar was filled with amazement at the poorness of his fortunes when he saw that he, who had conquered Rome at its pinnacle of power, was dragged by an unarmed and uncouth race into the utmost peril. He, therefore, who had signally crushed the most glorious flower of the Roman soldiery, and the forces of a most great and serene captain, now yielded to a base mob with the poorest and slenderest equipment; and he whose lustre in war the might of the strongest race on earth had failed to tarnish, was now too weak to withstand the tiny band of a miserable tribe. Hence, with that force which had helped him bravely to defeat the most famous pomp in all the world and the weightiest weapon of military power, and to subdue in the field all that thunderous foot, horse, and encampment; with this he had now, stealthily and like a thief, to endure the attacks of a wretched and obscure populace; nor must he blush to stain by a treachery in the night that noble glory of his which had been won in the light of day: for he took to a secret ambuscade instead of open bravery. This affair was as profitable in its issue as it was unhandsome in the doing.

Ragner was equally as well pleased at the flight of the Finns as he had been at that of Karl, and owned that he had found more strength in that defenceless people than in the best equipped soldiery; for he found the heaviest weapons of the Romans easier to bear than the light darts of this ragged tribe. Here, after killing the king of the Perms and routing the king of the Finns, Ragnar set an eternal memorial of his victory on the rocks, which bore the characters of his deeds on their face, and looked down upon them.

Meanwhile Ubbe was led by his grandfather, Esbern, to conceive an unholy desire for the throne; and, casting away all thought of the reverence due to his father, he claimed the emblem of royalty for his own head.

When Ragnar heard of his arrogance from Kelther and Thorkill, the earls of Sweden, he made a hasty voyage towards Gothland. Esbern, finding that these men were attached with a singular loyalty to the side of Ragnar, tried to bribe them to desert the king. But they did not swerve from their purpose, and replied that their will depended on that of Biorn, declaring that not a single Swede would dare to do what went against his pleasure.

Esbern speedily made an attempt on Biorn himself, addressing him most courteously through his envoys. Biorn said that he would never lean more to treachery than to good faith, and judged that it would be a most abominable thing to prefer the favour of an infamous brother to the love of a most righteous father. The envoys themselves he punished with hanging, because they counselled him to so grievous a crime. The Swedes, moreover, slew the rest of the train of the envoys in the same way, as a punishment for their mischievous advice. So Esbern, thinking that his secret and stealthy manoeuvres did not succeed fast enough, mustered his forces openly, and went publicly forth to war. But Iwar, the governor of Jutland, seeing no righteousness on either side of the impious conflict, avoided an unholy war by voluntary exile.

Ragnar attacked and slew Esbern in the bay that is called in Latin Viridis; he cut off the dead man's head and bade it be set upon the ship's prow, a dreadful sight for the seditious. But Ubbe took to flight, and again attacked his father, having revived the war in Zealand. Ubbe's ranks broke, and he was assailed single-handed from all sides; but he felled so many of the enemy's line that he was surrounded with a pile of the corpses of the foe as with a strong bulwark, and easily checked his assailants from approaching. At last he was overwhelmed by the thickening masses of the enemy, captured, and taken off to be laden with public fetters. By immense violence he disentangled his chains and cut them away. But when he tried to sunder and rend the bonds that were (then) put upon him, he could not in any wise escape his bars. But when Iwar heard that the rising in his country had been quelled by the punishment of the rebel, he went to Denmark. Ragnar received him with the greatest honour, because, while the unnatural war had raged its fiercest, he had behaved with the most entire filial respect.

Meanwhile Daxo long and vainly tried to overcome Hwitserk, who ruled over Sweden; but at last he entrapped him under pretence of making a peace, and attacked him. Hwitserk received him hospitably, but Daxo had prepared an army with weapons, who were to feign to be trading, ride into the city in carriages, and break with a night-attack into the house of their host. Hwitserk smote this band of robbers with such a slaughter that he was surrounded with a heap of his enemies' bodies, and could only be taken by letting down ladders from above. Twelve of his companions, who were captured at the same time by the enemy, were given leave to go back to their country; but they gave up their lives for their king, and chose to share the dangers of another rather than be quit of their own.

Daxo, moved with compassion at the beauty of Hwitserk, had not the heart to pluck the budding blossom of that noble nature, and offered him not only his life, but his daughter in marriage, with a dowry of half his kingdom; choosing rather to spare his comeliness than to punish his bravery. But the other, in the greatness of his soul, valued as nothing the life which he was given on sufferance, and spurned his safety as though it were some trivial benefit. Of his own will he embraced the sentence of doom, saying, that Ragnar would exact a milder vengeance for his son if he found that he had made his own choice in selecting the manner of his death. The enemy wondered at his rashness, and promised that he should die by the manner of death which he should choose for this punishment. This leave the young man accepted as a great kindness, and begged that he might be bound and burned with his friends. Daxo speedily complied with his prayers that craved for death, and by way of kindness granted him the end that he had chosen. When Ragnar heard of this, he began to grieve stubbornly even unto death, and not only put on the garb of mourning, but, in the exceeding sorrow of his soul, took to his bed and showed his grief by groaning. But his wife, who had more than a man's courage, chid his weakness, and put heart into him with her manful admonitions. Drawing his mind off from his woe, she bade him be zealous in the pursuit of war; declaring that it was better for so brave a father to avenge the bloodstained ashes of his son with weapons than with tears. She also told him not to whimper like a woman, and get as much disgrace by his tears as he had once earned glory by his valour. Upon these words Ragnar began to fear lest he should destroy his ancient name for courage by his womanish sorrow; so, shaking off his melancholy garb and putting away his signs of mourning, he revived his sleeping valour with hopes of speedy vengeance. Thus do the weak sometimes nerve the spirits of the strong. So he put his kingdom in charge of Iwar, and embraced with a father's love Ubbe, who was now restored to his ancient favour. Then he transported his fleet over to Russia, took Daxo, bound him in chains, and sent him away to be kept in Utgard.*

Ragnar showed on this occasion the most merciful moderation towards the slayer of his dearest son, since he sufficiently satisfied the vengeance which he desired, by the exile of the culprit rather than his death. This compassion shamed the Russians out of any further rage against such a king, who could not be driven even by the most grievous wrongs to inflict death upon his prisoners. Ragnar soon took Daxo back into favour, and restored him to his country, upon his promising that he would every year pay him his tribute barefoot, like a suppliant, with twelve elders, also unshod. For he thought it better to punish a prisoner and a suppliant gently, than to draw the axe of bloodshed; better to punish that proud neck with constant slavery than to sever it once and for all. Then he went on and appointed his son Erik, surnamed Wind-hat, over Sweden. Here, while Fridleif and Siward were serving under him, he found that the Norwegians and the Scots had wrongfully conferred the title of king on two other men. So he first overthrew the usurper to the power of Norway, and let Biorn have the country for his own benefit.

Then he summoned Biorn and Erik, ravaged the Orkneys, landed at last on the territory of the Scots, and in a three-days' battle wearied out their king Murial, and slew him. But Ragnar's sons, Dunwat and Radbard,

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***Utgard] Saxo, rationalising as usual, turns the mythical home of the giants into some terrestrial place in his vaguely-defined Eastern Europe.**

after fighting nobly, were slain by the enemy. So that the victory their father won was stained with their blood. He returned to Denmark, and found that his wife Swanloga had in the meantime died of disease. Straightway he sought medicine for his grief in loneliness, and patiently confined the grief of his sick soul within the walls of his house. But this bitter sorrow was driven out of him by the sudden arrival of Iwar, who had been expelled from the kingdom. For the Gauls had made him fly, and had wrongfully bestowed royal power on a certain Ella, the son of Hame. Ragnar took Iwar to guide him, since he was acquainted with the country, gave orders for a fleet, and approached the harbour called York. Here he disembarked his forces, and after a battle which lasted three days, he made Ella, who had trusted in the valour of the Gauls, desirous to fly. The affair cost much blood to the English and very little to the Danes. Here Ragnar completed a year of conquest, and then, summoning his sons to help him, he went to Ireland, slew its king Melbrik, besieged Dublin, which was filled with wealth of the barbarians, attacked it, and received its surrender. There he lay in camp for a year; and then, sailing through the midland sea, he made his way to the Hellespont. He won signal victories as he crossed all the intervening countries, and no ill-fortune anywhere checked his steady and prosperous advance.

Harald, meanwhile, with the adherence of certain Danes who were cold-hearted servants in the army of Ragnar, disturbed his country with renewed sedition, and came forward claiming the title of king. He was met by the arms of Ragnar returning from the Hellespont; but being unsuccessful, and seeing that his resources of defence at home were exhausted, he went to ask help of Ludwig, who was then stationed at Mainz. But Ludwig, filled with the greatest zeal for promoting his religion, imposed a condition on the Barbarian, promising him help if he would agree to follow the worship of Christ. For he said there could be no agreement of hearts between those who embraced discordant creeds. Anyone, therefore, who asked for help, must first have a fellowship in religion. No men could be partners in great works who were separated by a different form of worship. This decision procured not only salvation for Ludwig's guest, but the praise of piety for Ludwig himself, who, as soon as Harald had gone to the holy font, accordingly strengthened him with Saxon auxiliaries. Trusting in these, Harald built a temple in the land of Sleswik with much care and cost, to be hallowed to God. Thus he borrowed a pattern of the most holy way from the worship of Rome. He unhallowed, pulled down the shrines that had been profaned by the error of misbelievers, outlawed the sacrificers, abolished the (heathen) priesthood, and was the first to introduce the religion of Christianity to his uncouth country. Rejecting the worship of demons, he was zealous for that of God. Lastly, he observed with the most scrupulous care whatever concerned the protection of religion. But he began with more piety than success. For Ragnar came up, outraged the holy rites he had brought in, outlawed the true faith, restored the false one to its old position, and bestowed on the ceremonies the same honour as before. As for Harald, he deserted and cast in his lot with sacrilege. For though he was a notable ensample by his introduction of religion, yet he was the first who was seen to neglect it, and this illustrious promoter of holiness proved a most infamous forsaker of the same.

Meanwhile, Ella betook himself to the Irish, and put to the sword or punished all those who were closely and loyally attached to Ragnar. Then Ragnar attacked him with his fleet, but, by the just visitation of the Omnipotent, was openly punished for disparaging religion. For when he had been taken and cast into prison, his guilty limbs were given to serpents to devour, and adders found ghastly substance in the fibres of his entrails. His liver was eaten away, and a snake, like a deadly executioner, beset his very heart. Then in a courageous voice he recounted all his deeds in order, and at the end of his recital added the following sentence: "If the porkers knew the punishment of the boar-pig, surely they would break into the sty and hasten to loose him from his affliction." At this saying, Ella conjectured that some of his sons were yet alive, and bade that the executioners should stop and the vipers be removed. The servants ran up to accomplish his bidding; but Ragnar was dead, and forestalled the order of the king. Surely we must say that this man had a double lot for his share? By one, he had a fleet unscathed, an empire well-inclined, and immense power as a rover; while the other inflicted on him the ruin of his fame, the slaughter of his soldiers, and a most bitter end. The executioner beheld him beset with poisonous beasts, and asps gorging on that heart which he had borne steadfast in the face of every peril. Thus a most glorious conqueror declined to the piteous lot of a prisoner; a lesson that no man should put too much trust in fortune.

Iwar heard of this disaster as he happened to be looking on at the games. Nevertheless, he kept an unmoved countenance, and in nowise broke down. Not only did he dissemble his grief and conceal the news of his father's death, but he did not even allow a clamour to arise, and forbade the panic-stricken people to leave the scene of the sports. Thus, loth to interrupt the spectacle by the ceasing of the games, he neither clouded his countenance nor turned his eyes from public merriment to dwell upon his private sorrow; for he would not fall suddenly into the deepest melancholy from the height of festal joy, or seem to behave more like an afflicted son than a blithe captain.

But when Siward heard the same tidings, he loved his father more than he cared for his own pain, and in his distraction plunged deeply into his foot the spear he chanced to be holding, dead to all bodily troubles in his stony sadness. For he wished to hurt some part of his body severely, that he might the more patiently bear the wound in his soul. By this act he showed at once his bravery and his grief, and bore his lot like a son who was more afflicted and steadfast. But Biorn received the tidings of his father's death while he was playing at dice, and squeezed so violently the piece that he was grasping that he wrung the blood from his fingers and shed it on the table; whereon he said that assuredly the cast of fate was more fickle than that of the very die which he was throwing. When Ella heard this, he judged that his father's death had been borne with the toughest and most stubborn spirit by that son of the three who had paid no filial respect to his decease; and therefore he dreaded the bravery of Iwar most.

Iwar went towards England, and when he saw that his fleet was not strong enough to join battle with the enemy, he chose to be cunning rather than bold, and tried a shrewd trick on Ella, begging as a pledge of peace between them a strip of land as great as he could cover with a horse's hide. He gained his request, for the king supposed that it would cost little, and thought himself happy that so strong a foe begged for a little boon instead of a great one; supposing that a tiny skin would cover but a very little land. But Iwar cut the hide out and lengthened it into very slender thongs, thus enclosing a piece of ground large enough to build a city on. Then Ella came to repent of his lavishness, and tardily set to reckoning the size of the hide, measuring the little skin more narrowly now that it was cut up than when it was whole. For that which he had thought would encompass a little strip of ground, he saw lying wide over a great estate. Iwar brought into the city, when he founded it, supplies that would serve amply for a siege, wishing the defences to be as good against scarcity as against an enemy.

Meantime, Siward and Biorn came up with a fleet of 400 ships, and with open challenge declared war against the king. This they did at the appointed time; and when they had captured him, they ordered the figure of an eagle to be cut in his back, rejoicing to crush their most ruthless foe by marking him with the cruellest of birds. Not satisfied with imprinting a wound on him, they salted the mangled flesh. Thus Ella was done to death, and Biorn and Siward went back to their own kingdoms.

Iwar governed England for two years. Meanwhile the Danes were stubborn in revolt, and made war, and delivered the sovereignty publicly to a certain SIWARD and to ERIK, both of the royal line. The sons of Ragnar, together with a fleet of 1,700 ships, attacked them at Sleswik, and destroyed them in a conflict which lasted six months. Barrows remain to tell the tale. The sound on which the war was conducted has gained equal glory by the death of Siward. And now the royal stock was almost extinguished, saving only the sons of Ragnar. Then, when Biorn and Erik had gone home, Iwar and Siward settled in Denmark, that they might curb the rebels with a stronger rein, setting Agnar to govern England. Agnar was stung because the English rejected him, and, with the help of Siward, chose, rather than foster the insolence of the province that despised him, to dispeople it and leave its fields, which were matted in decay, with none to till them. He covered the richest land of the island with the most hideous desolation, thinking it better to be lord of a wilderness than of a headstrong country. After this he wished to avenge Erik, who had been slain in Sweden by the malice of a certain Osten. But while he was narrowly bent on avenging another, he squandered his own blood on the foe; and while he was eagerly trying to punish the slaughter of his brother, sacrificed his own life to brotherly love.

Thus Siward, by the sovereign vote of the whole Danish assembly, received the empire of his father. But after the defeats he had inflicted everywhere he was satisfied with the honour he received at home, and liked better to be famous with the gown than with the sword. He ceased to be a man of camps, and changed from the fiercest of despots into the most punctual guardian of peace. He found as much honour in ease and leisure as he had used to think lay in many victories. Fortune so favoured his change of pursuits, that no foe ever attacked him, nor he any foe. He died, and Erik, who was a very young child, inherited his nature, rather than his realm or his tranquillity. For Erik, the brother of Harald, despising his exceedingly tender years, invaded the country with rebels, and seized the crown; nor was he ashamed to assail the lawful infant sovereign, and to assume an unrightful power. In thus bringing himself to despoil a feeble child of the kingdom he showed himself the more unworthy of it. Thus he stripped the other of his throne, but himself of all his virtues, and cast all manliness out of his heart, when he made war upon a cradle: for where covetousness and ambition flamed, love of kindred could find no place. But this brutality was requited by the wrath of a divine vengeance. For the war between this man and Gudorm, the son of Harald, ended suddenly with such slaughter that they were both slain, with numberless others; and the royal stock of the Danes, now worn out by the most terrible massacres, was reduced to the only son of the above Siward.

This man (Erik) won the fortune of a throne by losing his kindred; it was luckier for him to have his relations dead than alive. He forsook the example of all the rest, and hastened to tread in the steps of his grandfather; for he suddenly came out as a most zealous practitioner of roving. And would that he had not shown himself rashly to inherit the spirit of Ragnar, by his abolition of Christian worship! For he continually tortured all the most religious men, or stripped them of their property and banished them. But it were idle for me to blame the man's beginnings when I am to praise his end. For that life is more laudable of which the foul beginning is checked by a glorious close, than that which begins commendably but declines into faults and infamies. For Erik, upon the healthy admonitions of Ansgarius, laid aside the errors of his impious heart, and atoned for whatsoever he had done amiss in the insolence thereof; showing himself as strong in the observance of religion as he had been in slighting it. Thus he not only took a draught of more wholesome teaching with obedient mind, but wiped off early stains by his purity at the end. He had a son KANUTE by the daughter of Gudorm, who was also the granddaughter of Harald; and him he left to survive his death.

While this child remained in infancy a guardian was required for the pupil and for the realm. But inasmuch it seemed to most people either invidious or difficult to give the aid that this office needed, it was resolved that a man should be chosen by lot. For the wisest of the Danes, fearing much to make a choice by their own will in so lofty a matter, allowed more voice to external chance than to their own opinions, and entrusted the issue of the selection rather to luck than to sound counsel. The issue was that a certain Enni-gnup (Steep-brow), a man of the highest and most entire virtue, was forced to put his shoulder to this heavy burden; and when he entered on the administration which chance had decreed, he oversaw, not only the early rearing of the king, but the affairs of the whole people. For which reason some who are little versed in our history give this man a central place in its annals. But when Kanute had passed through the period of boyhood, and had in time grown to be a man, he left those who had done him the service of bringing him up, and turned from an almost hopeless youth to the practice of unhoped-for virtue; being deplorable for this reason only, that he passed from life to death without the tokens of the Christian faith.

But soon the sovereignty passed to his son **Frode**. This man's fortune, increased by arms and warfare, rose to such a height of prosperity that he brought back to the ancient yoke the provinces which had once revolted from the Danes, and bound them in their old obedience. He also came forward to be baptised with holy water in England, which had for some while past been versed in Christianity. But he desired that his personal salvation should overflow and become general, and begged that Denmark should be instructed in divinity by Agapete, who was then Pope of Rome. But he was cut off before his prayers attained this wish. His death befell before the arrival of the messengers from Rome: and indeed his intention was better than his fortune, and he won as great a reward in heaven for his intended piety as others are vouchsafed for their achievement.

His son GORM, who had the surname of "The Englishman," because he was born in England, gained the sovereignty in the island on his father's death; but his fortune, though it came soon, did not last long. He left England for Denmark to put it in order; but a long misfortune was the fruit of this short absence. For the English, who thought that their whole chance of freedom lay in his being away, planned an open revolt from the Danes, and in hot haste took heart to rebel. But the greater the hatred and contempt of England, the greater the loyal attachment of Denmark to the king. Thus while he stretched out his two hands to both provinces in his desire for sway, he gained one, but lost the lordship of the other irretrievably; for he never made any bold effort to regain it. So hard is it to keep a hold on very large empires.

After this man his son HARALD came to be king of Denmark; he is half-forgotten by posterity, and lacks all record for famous deeds, because he rather preserved than extended the possessions of the realm.

After this the throne was obtained by GORM, a man whose soul was ever hostile to religion, and who tried to efface all regard for Christ's worshippers, as though they were the most abominable of men. All those who shared this rule of life he harassed with divers kinds of injuries and incessantly pursued with whatever slanders he could. Also, in order to restore the old worship to the shrines, he razed to its lowest foundations, as though it were some unholy abode of impiety, a temple which religious men had founded in a stead in Sleswik; and those whom he did not visit with tortures he punished by the demolition of the holy chapel. Though this man was thought notable for his stature, his mind did not answer to his body; for he kept himself so well sated with power that he rejoiced more in saving than increasing his dignity, and thought it better to guard his own than to attack what belonged to others: caring more to look to what he had than to swell his havings.

This man was counselled by the elders to celebrate the rites of marriage, and he wooed Thyra, the daughter of Ethelred, the king of the English, for his wife. She surpassed other women in seriousness and shrewdness, and laid the condition on her suitor that she would not marry him till she had received Denmark as a dowry. This compact was made between them, and she was betrothed to Gorm. But on the first night that she went up on to the marriage-bed, she prayed her husband most earnestly that she should be allowed to go for three days free from intercourse with man. For she resolved to have no pleasure of love till she had learned by some omen in a vision that her marriage would be fruitful. Thus, under pretence of self-control, she deferred her experience of marriage, and veiled under a show of modesty her wish to learn about her issue. She put off lustful intercourse, inquiring, under the feint of chastity, into the fortune she would have in continuing her line. Some conjecture that she refused the pleasures of the nuptial couch in order to win her mate over to Christianity by her abstinence. But the youth, though he was most ardently bent on her love, yet chose to regard the continence of another more than his own desires, and thought it nobler to control the impulses of the night than to rebuff the prayers of his weeping mistress; for he thought that her beseechings, really coming from calculation, had to do with modesty. Thus it befell that he who should have done a husband's part made himself the guardian of her chastity so that the reproach of an infamous mind should not be his at the very beginning of his marriage; as though he had yielded more to the might of passion than to his own self-respect. Moreover that he might not seem to forestall by his lustful embraces the love which the maiden would not grant, he not only forbore to let their sides that were next one another touch, but even severed them by his drawn sword, and turned the bed into a divided shelter for his bride and himself. But he soon tasted in the joyous form of a dream the pleasure which he postponed from free loving kindness. For, when his spirit was steeped in slumber, he thought that two birds glided down from the privy parts of his wife, one larger than the other; that they poised their bodies aloft and soared swiftly to heaven, and, when a little time had elapsed, came back and sat on either of his hands. A second, and again a third time, when they had been refreshed by a short rest, they ventured forth to the air with outspread wings. At last the lesser of them came back without his fellow, and with wings smeared with blood. He was amazed with this imagination, and, being in a deep sleep, uttered a cry to betoken his astonishment, filling the whole house with an uproarious shout. When his servants questioned him, he related his vision; and Thyra, thinking that she would be blest with offspring, forbore her purpose to put off her marriage, eagerly relaxing the chastity for which she had so hotly prayed. Exchanging celibacy for love, she granted her husband full joy of herself, requiting his virtuous self-restraint with the fulness of permitted intercourse, and telling him that she would not have married him at all, had she not inferred from these images in the dream which he had related, the certainty of her being fruitful.

By a device as cunning as it was strange, Thyra's pretended modesty passed into an acknowledgment of her future offspring. Nor did fate disappoint her hopes. Soon she was the fortunate mother of Kanute and Harald. When these princes had attained man's estate, they put forth a fleet and quelled the reckless insolence of the Sclavs. Neither did they leave England free from an attack of the same kind. Ethelred was delighted with their spirit, and rejoiced at the violence his nephews offered him; accepting an abominable wrong as though it were the richest of benefits. For he saw far more merit in their bravery than in piety. Thus he thought it nobler to be attacked by foes than courted by cowards, and felt that he saw in their valiant promise a sample of their future manhood.

For he could not doubt that they would some day attack foreign realms, since they so boldly claimed those of their mother. He so much preferred their wrongdoing to their service, that he passed over his daughter, and bequeathed England in his will to these two, not scrupling to set the name of grandfather before that of father. Nor was he unwise; for he knew that it beseemed men to enjoy the sovereignty rather than women, and considered that he ought to separate the lot of his unwarlike daughter from that of her valiant sons. Hence Thyra saw her sons inheriting the goods of her father, not grudging to be disinherited herself. For she thought that the preference above herself was honourable to her, rather than insulting.

Kanute and Harald enriched themselves with great gains from sea-roving, and most confidently aspired to lay hands on Ireland. Dublin, which was considered the capital of the country, was beseiged. Its king went into a wood adjoining the city with a few very skilled archers, and with treacherous art surrounded Kanute (who was present with a great throng of soldiers witnessing the show of the games by night), and aimed a deadly arrow at him from afar. It struck the body of the king in front, and pierced him with a mortal wound. But Kanute feared that the enemy would greet his peril with an outburst of delight. He therefore wished his disaster to be kept dark; and summoning voice with his last breath, he ordered the games to be gone through without disturbance. By this device he made the Danes masters of Ireland ere he made his own death known to the Irish.

Who would not bewail the end of such a man, whose self-mastery served to give the victory to his soldiers, by reason of the wisdom that outlasted his life? For the safety of the Danes was most seriously endangered, and was nearly involved in the most deadly peril; yet because they obeyed the dying orders of their general they presently triumphed over those they feared.

Gorm had now reached the extremity of his days, having been blind for many years, and had prolonged his old age to the utmost bounds of the human lot, being more anxious for the life and prosperity of his sons than for the few days he had to breathe. But so great was his love for his elder son that he swore that he would slay with his own hand whosoever first brought him news of his death. As it chanced, Thyra heard sure tidings that this son had perished. But when no man durst openly hint this to Gorm, she fell back on her cunning to defend her, and revealed by her deeds the mischance which she durst not speak plainly out. For she took the royal robes off her husband and dressed him in filthy garments, bringing him other signs of grief also, to explain the cause of her mourning; for the ancients were wont to use such things in the performance of obsequies, bearing witness by their garb to the bitterness of their sorrow. Then said Gorm: "Dost thou declare to me the death of Kanute?"* And Thyra said: "That is proclaimed by thy presage, not by mine." By this answer she made out her lord a dead man and herself a widow, and had to lament her husband as soon as her son. Thus, while she announced the fate of her son to her husband, she united them in death, and followed the obsequies of both with equal mourning; shedding the tears of a wife upon the one and of a mother upon the other; though at that moment she ought to have been cheered with comfort rather than crushed with disasters.

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*Kanute] Here the vernacular is far finer. The old king notices "Denmark is drooping, dead must my son be!" puts on the signs of mourning, and dies.

APPENDIX I

PASSAGES FROM LATER BOOKS OF SAXO.

I.

Story of Toke and the Apple (Bk. x, p. 329, ed. Holder).

One Toke, who had served some while with the king (Harald Bluethroth), had made many men foes to his virtues by the services wherein he overpassed the zeal of his comrades. Talking in his cups among the feasters, he chanced to boast that if an apple, however small, were set at a distance upon a stick, he would hit it with the first shaft he aimed. This speech, catching the ears of his detractors, reached the hearing of the king. But the unscrupulous monarch presently turned the father's confidence to the peril of the son, and commanded that this most sweet pledge of Toke's life should be put in the place of the stick with the apple on his head, and should suffer with his own head for that windy boast, unless he who made the promise should with the first arrow that he tried strike the apple off it. Thus the treacherous slanders of others took up his half-tipsy vaunt, and the soldier was forced by his king's behest to do better than his promises, so that his words bound him to more than their own consequence . . . So Toke brought the lad forth, and warned him straitly to await the singing of the arrow with steadfast ear and unswerving head, so as not to balk by any slight motion the successful trial of his skill. Also he considered a plan to remove the lad's fear, and made him turn away his face, that he should not be scared by the sight of the missile. Then he put out three arrows from the quiver; the first that he fitted to the string struck the mark proposed. [Eulogy on father and son.] . . . . But when the king asked Toke why he had taken three shafts from the quiver, when he was to try his fortunes but once with the bow, Toke answered, "That I might avenge on thyself the miss of the first with the point of the others, lest perchance my innocence might suffer and thy violence escape."

II.

Allusion to Niflung story (Bk. XIII, p. 427).

[Magnus, plotting to slay Kanute, sends a Saxon minstrel who is in the conspiracy, to lure him out to a wood at night.]

Then the minstrel, knowing that Kanute was a great lover both of the Saxon name and customs, wished to arm him with caution, but thought that the sanctity of his oath (of conspiracy) was in the way of his acting thus. Therefore, thinking it a sin to betray the matter plainly, he tried to do so covertly. . . . So he purposely started to relate in a noble song the treachery of Grimhild towards her brethren, trying by this example of notorious guile to inspire him with fear of a like fate. [Kanute ignores the hint and perishes.]

III.

The Statue of Suanto-Vitus (Bk. XIV, p. 564 *sqq.*)

[Waldemar I and Absalon lay siege to Arkon in Rügen, a city on a ness with precipice walls.]

On a level in the midst of the city was to be seen a wooden temple of most graceful workmanship, held in honour not only for the splendour of its ornament, but for the divinity of an image set up within it. The outside of the building was bright with careful graving [or painting], whereon sundry shapes were rudely and uncouthly pictured. There was but one gate for entrance. The shrine itself was shut in a double row of enclosures, the outer whereof was made of walls and covered with a red summit; while the inner one rested on four pillars, and instead of having walls was gorgeous with hangings, not communicating with the outer save for the roof and a few beams. In the temple stood a huge image, far overtopping all human stature, marvellous for its four heads and four necks, two facing the breast and two the back. Moreover, of those in front as well as of those behind, one looked leftwards and the other rightwards. The beards were figured as shaven and the hair as clipped; the skilled workman might be thought to have copied the fashion of the Rügeners in the dressing of the heads. In the right hand it held a horn wrought of divers metals, which the priest, who was versed in its rites, used to fill every year with new wine, in order to foresee the crops of the next season from the disposition of the liquor. In the left there was a representation of a bow, the arm being drawn back to the side. A tunic was figured reaching to the shanks, which were made of different woods, and so secretly joined to the knees that the place of the join could only be detected by narrow scrutiny. The feet were seen close to the earth, their base being hid underground. Not far off a bridle and saddle and many emblems of godhead were visible. Men's marvel at these things was increased by a sword of notable size, whose scabbard and hilt were not only excellently graven, but also graced outside with [mounts *or* inlaying of] silver. This image was regularly worshipped in the following way: Once every year, after harvest, a motley throng from the whole isle would sacrifice beasts for peace-offering before the temple of the image, and keep ceremonial feast. Its priest was conspicuous for his long beard and hair, beyond the common fashion of the country.

On the day before that on which he must sacrifice, the officiating priest used to sweep with brooms the shrine, which he had the sole right of entering. He took heed not to breathe within the building. As often as he needed to draw or give breath, he would run out to the door, lest forsooth the divine presence should be tainted with human breath. On the morrow, the people being at watch before the doors, he took the cup from the image, and looked at it narrowly; if any of the liquor put in had gone away he thought that this pointed to a scanty harvest for next year. When he had noted this he bade them keep, against the future, the corn which they had. If he saw no lessening in its usual fulness, he foretold fertile crops. So, according to this omen, he told them to use the harvest of the present year now thriftly, now generously. Then he poured out the old wine as a libation at the feet of the image, and filled the empty cup with fresh; and feigning the part of a cupbearer, he adored the statue, and in a regular form of address prayed for good increase of wealth and conquests for himself, his country and its people. This done, he put the cup to his lips, and drank it up over-fast at an unbroken draught; refilling it then with wine, he put it back in the hand of the statue.

Mead-cakes were also placed for offering, round in shape and great, almost up to the height of a man's stature. The priest used to put this between himself and the people, and ask, Whether the men of Rügen could see him? By this request he prayed not for the doom of his people or himself, but for increase of the coming crops. Then he greeted the crowd in the name of the image, and bade them prolong their worship of the god with diligent sacrificing, promising them sure rewards of their tillage, and victory by sea and land . . . . [The people keep orgy the rest of the day to please the god.] . . . Each male and female hung a coin every year as a gift in worship of the image. It was also allotted a third of the spoil and plunder, as though these had been got and won by its protection.

This god also had 300 horses appointed to it, and as many men-at-arms riding them, all of whose gains, either by arms or theft, were put in the care of the priest. Out of these spoils he wrought sundry emblems and temple-ornaments which he consigned to locked coffers containing store of money and piles of time-eaten purple. Here, too, was to be seen a mass of public and private gifts, the contributions of anxious applicants for blessings. This statue was worshipped with the tributes of all Sclavonia, and neighbouring kings did not fail to honour its sacrifice with gift. . . . . [Even Sweyn gave a wrought cup, and there were smaller shrines.] . . . . Also it possessed a special white horse, the hairs of whose mane and tail it was thought impious to pluck, and which only the priest had the privilege of feeding and riding, lest the use of the divine beast might become common and therefore cheap. On this horse, in the belief of Rügen, Suanto-Vitus—so the image was called—rode to war against the foes of his religion. The chief proof was that the horse when stabled at night was commonly found in the morning bespattered wih mire and sweat, as though he had come from exercise and travelled leagues. Omens also were taken by this horse, thus: When war was determined against any district, the servants set out three rows of spears, two joined crosswise, each row being planted point downwards in the earth; the rows an equal distance apart. When it was time to make the expedition, after a solemn prayer, the horse was led in harness out of the porch by the priest. If he crossed the rows with the right foot before the left it was taken as a lucky omen of warfare; if he put the left first, so much as once, the plan of attacking that district was dropped; neither was any voyage finally fixed, until three paces in succession of the fortunate manner of walking were observed. Also folk faring out on sundry businesses took an omen concerning their wishes from their first meeting with the beast. Was the omen happy, they blithely went on their journey; was it baleful, they turned and went home.

Nor were these people ignorant of the use of lots. Three bits of wood, black on one side, white on the other, were cast into the lap. Fair, meant good luck; dusky, ill. Neither were their women free from this sort of knowledge, for they would sit by the hearth and draw random lines in the ashes without counting. If these when counted were even they were thought to bode success; if odd, ill-fortune. [The king goes to attack the town and efface profane rites. His men make works, but he says these are needless] because the Rügeners had once been taken by Karl Cæsar, and bidden to honour with tribute Saint Vitus of Corvey, famous for his sanctified death. But when the conqueror died they wished to regain freedom, and exchanged slavery for superstition; putting up an image at home to which they gave the name of the holy Vitus, and, scorning the people of Corvey, they proceeded to transfer the tribute to its worship, saying that they were content with their own Vitus, and need not serve a strange one. [Vitus would come and avenge himself, so the king prophesies; the siege is related; the people trust their defences, and guard] the tower over the gate only with emblems and standards. Among these was Stanitia [*margin,* Stuatira], notable for size and hue, which received as much adoration from the Rügeners as almost all the gods together; for shielded by her, they took leave to assail the laws of God and man, counting nothing unlawful which they liked . . . . [the town is taken and fired] p. 574. (The image could not be prized up without iron tools. Esborn and Snio cut it down). The image fell to the ground with a crash. Much purple hung round the temple; it was gorgeous, but so rotten with decay that it could not bear the touch. There were also the horns of woodland beasts, marvellous in themselves and for their workmanship. A demon in the form of a dusky animal was seen to quit the inner part and suddenly vanish from the sight of the bystanders. [The image of Suanto-Vitus is then chopped into firewood.]

IV.

The Image at Karentia (*Garz*) *in Rügen* (Bk. XIV, p. 577).

[Absalon goes against the Karentines; takes the town, and comes upon three temples of a similar kind to that at Arkon.] The greater temple was situated in the midst of its own ante-chamber, but both were enclosed with purple (hangings) instead of walls, the summit of the roof being propped merely on pillars. So the servants, tearing down the gear of the ante-chamber, at last stretched out their hands to the inmost veil of the temple. This was removed, and an oaken image which they called Rugie-Vitus (Rügen's Vitus) was exposed on every side amid mockery at its hideousness. For the swallows had built their nests beneath its features, and had piled a heap of droppings on its breast. The god was only fit to have his effigy thus hideously befouled by birds. Also in its head were set seven faces, after human likeness, all covered in under a single poll, and the workman had also bound by its side in a single belt seven real swords with their scabbards. The eighth it held in its hand drawn; this was fitted in the wrist and fixed very fast with an iron nail, and the hand must be cut off before it could be wrenched away; which led to the image being mutilated. Its thickness was beyond that of a human body, but it was so long that Absalon, standing a-tip-toe, could scarce reach its chin with the little axe he was wont to carry in his hand. The people had believed this god to preside over wars, as if it had the power of Mars. Nothing in this image pleased the eye; its features were hideous with uncouth graving (*or* painting). [It is cut down, and its own people spurn it and are converted. The assailants go on] to the image of Pore-Vitus, which was worshipped in the next town. This was also five-headed, but represented without weapons. On this being cut down they go to the temple of Porenutius. This statue, representing four faces, had the fifth inserted in its bosom; its left hand touched the brow, and its right the chin. [It is destroyed.]

APPENDIX II.

SAXO'S HAMLET.

I.

GOETHE is said to have been so struck by Saxo's tale of Amleth, that he thought of himself treating it freely, without reference to Shakspere. For Shakspere, reading Belleforest or his translator, rejected or changed so many traits that the story of Amleth became almost as different as his soul. Leaving aside Belleforest, with his innocent diffuse platitudes, and the earlier play from which Shakspere may have worked, let us press out the likenesses, and the differences, between the rich barbarous tale which Saxo wrought out of motley sources, and that tale whose message to the modern world, so far from becoming exhausted, increases.

Amleth, like Hamlet, is a prince, whose father is slain by his jealous uncle, and whose mother Gerutha (Gertrude) incestuously marries the murderer, Feng. Feng's guilt is open, and he crowns his crimes by pretending he had slain his brother for Gerutha's good; Shakspere drops these points. Amleth then feigns madness. We know how Shakspere so subtilises this motive that the degree of reality in Hamlet's distraction is disputed, some thinking it wholly real, some wholly feigned, while others, without attempting to draw a rigid line, hold that Hamlet is an actor who flings himself into a part which presently invades his very self. But there is no doubt about Amleth; he not only feigns, but feigns in order to execute a revenge, on the fanciful cruelty of whose long-considered plan—a whole palace and company of feasters to be wrapped in one net and flame of destruction—we are led to think that he sates his imagination for a whole year in advance. Hence the whole play of doubts upon Hamlet's intellect, and of vacillations upon his will, is excluded from the very idea of the old story. Shakspere also omits the tricks by which Amleth both hides and symbolises his intention, such as the "crooks" pointed in the fire, and his riddles, which, indeed, are absent in Belleforest. But the attribute of riddling speech is, in Hamlet, infinitely developed, and the temptations set in the way of the two princes have marked likenesses. Amleth's foster-sister is a vague presentiment of Ophelia, even as the friend who warns Amleth against her is of Horatio. Then follows the eavesdropping prototype of Polonius, whom Hamlet runs through* in his scene with his mother.

In Shakspere or his immediate source the girl is made his daughter; in Saxo they have no connection. Hamlet's harangue to his mother is descended straight from Amleth, and the two may be compared in detail. This speech, as it stands in Saxo's rhetoric, is evidently his own, and thus constitutes the chief place where Shakspere, of course unwittingly, bears traces of his very words. Then follows the embassy to Britain, and the motive of the doomed man causing the death of his executioner by altering the names in the warrant. But, agreeably to the root-idea of Saxo's version, Amleth, before departure, has laid his plans, and bidden his converted mother net the fatal hangings, which with the crooks, are to encompass his vengeance. Hamlet has no such plan, nor do we hear of any such adventures of his in England as those which are detailed of Amleth, and which form the link with the post-Shaksperean portion of his tale in Saxo's Fourth Book. Amleth's return and the fashion of his vengeance, of course differ; and the difference is due not merely to the impossibility of burning a whole palace upon an Elizabethan stage, but to the radical difference of the heroes. Amleth has to fulfil his plan with indiscriminate slaughter, and then to reign. Hamlet only punishes the criminal, and this by accident, at the last moment before his own destruction. The sole points in common are that both the uncle and the mother are killed. After this point Amleth enters on a wholly new set of adventures which Shakspere, though he found them in Belleforest, did not need.

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*Saxo's "straw" becomes in Belleforest and Shakspere the hangings behind which the listener lurks.

"Two points in Amleth's soul" are yet to mention. Saxo makes him not only long-headed and full of equivocations, but punctilious of verbal truthfulness. He lies, that is, wishes to deceive, but his words, if he is to be challenged afterwards, will bear a truthful colour. "Though his words did not lack truth, there was nothing to betoken the truth." He is also preternaturally observant of small things. These traits are transformed in Hamlet, who is continually giving double answers, not from love of truth, but from love of mockery, as if to satisfy his delight in fooling others; and who has also sudden formidable outbursts of penetration, as with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. But the point for remark is, that nearly all the differences of motive between Shakspere and Saxo depend on their different conceptions of the prince's character: Amleth being quite sane and quite resolute, Hamlet neither.

We cannot wonder at Goethe having seen rich artistic possibilities in Saxo.* Into none of his tales does Saxo put more of himself; for colour of incident, as in the burning of the palace, for sweep and power of declamation, as in the harangue to the Danes, he has written nothing to equal the story of Amleth, unless it be the story of Starkad. It must be granted that Saxo's blemishes appear also; he is unwieldy in his narrative, and he leaves difficulties without explaining them. His tale cannot always be understood as he gives it. What is the meaning of Amleth's dark answers? What is the sense of the message through the gadfly? We can answer some of these questions, but Saxo does not. He acquiesces in and reports these seeming puerilities without trying to smooth them down, or seeing that the reader will be thrown out. Yet this defect of the artist is a merit of the reporter. It avouches his fidelity, and we are let into some of the secrets of his workmanship and of his sources. What

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*Uhland, one of the first men who tried to collate Saxo with Norse authorities, speaks aptly of the "broad copiousness, romantic ornamentation, and sharp-wittedness" evident in the tale. (*Werke,* v. 205-9.)

sources he may have had for his story or stories of Amleth, and some parallels that may be found for these, I now briefly consider.

II.

The tale of Saxo falls into *two parts,* divided by the accession of Amleth to power (the former part only, and not all of that, being used by Shakspere). These parts, whether or no they were connected originally, are closely connected in Saxo. Amleth's relations, both with the King of Denmark and the King of Britain, are quite continuous; and his adventures in Scotland are partly linked to his past by the storied shield. By this, Hermutrude recognises Amleth for the famous hero who revenged his father. Thus Saxo offers us not two stories, but two chapters in the same story. This is important for those who would decompose Amleth into two distinct heroes, one belonging to the Third and one to the Fourth Book. Such theorists have to admit either that Saxo deliberately invented the above links between the two, or that he took the legend in some form later than what they profess to be the original one. We must note, then, what indications Saxo himself gives of his sources, and what undoubted parallels can be found. The following are materials for a judgment.

It is clear from one passage that Saxo had *two* versions before him for at least a single trait. When Amleth detects a taint in the King of England's liquor, it is found to come from a well spoilt with sword-rust; but "others relate" that he "detected some bees that had formerly fed in the paunch of a dead man." No such reference to another version is found elsewhere in the story, nor is there anything in the passage to tell us whether the sources before Saxo were oral or written.

Amleth was in popular tradition a *Jutlander*. "A plain in Jutland is to be found, famous for his name and burial-place." Two places, says Müller, are still called *Amelhede*. If we are to trust Saxo as a reporter at all, this proves that the tale as he received it concerned a prince represented as (1) *historical*, (2) *Jutish*. That there was such a prince we have no positive evidence for believing; that the legend in this form concerns a Jute, is consistent with either a Danish or an Icelandic authorship for Saxo's version of it. To form an opinion on this latter point, we must consider the bearing of

1. The *allusion to Amlódi*. The verse put, in the Prose Edda, into the mouth of the tenth century poet-adventurer, Snæbiorn, runs (*C. P. B.* ii. 55): "Men say that the nine maidens of the island-mill (the ocean) are working hard at the host-devouring skerry-quern (the sea), out beyond the skirts of the earth; yea, they have for ages past been grinding at Amlódi's meal-bin (the sea)." This is the only extant allusion to Amlódi by name earlier than Saxo. The inference from it is, that a myth was current in Iceland, 200 years before Saxo, concerning a man or giant, Amlódi, whose quern the sea was called; perhaps an inhabitant of its depths. He, then, is (1) *mythical*, (2) *Icelandic*. We can now pursue comparisons in Icelandic myth, both ancient and modern, not indeed to this, but to other points of Saxo's narrative.

2. Parallels to the earlier part (Bk. III) of Amleth's career are found in the tale of Helgi and Hroar in Hrolfssaga Kraka. Let us number these. There are (i) the dispossessed sons of Halfdan, whom (ii) his brother Fródi has murdered. Fródi (iii) pursues them, and tries by sorcerers to find their whereabouts; but is baulked by the astuteness of Vifil, who keeps them on an isle. They go (iv) to a feast with Halfdan, disguised and under false names, one of them (v) behaving wildly. Their sister Signy recognises them, there is a scene of confusion, they nail up the doors; (vi) the king is destroyed, as well as (vii) their mother, who refuses to quit the hall, and whom we may infer (viii?) had allied herself with the usurper.

These resemblances to Amleth's story resolve themselves mainly into the *motive* for vengeance and the *method* of vengeance. The element of *feigned madness* is lightly touched on ("Helgi . . . . laetr sèr alla vega heimskliga," p. 9); but the version of this tale which Saxo himself gives us (Bk. VII), wherein the names of the sons or Harald and Halfdan, brings out the feigned madness more strongly, and lays equal stress on the crime and the punishment.* The Amleth story however, is so different in its details that the resemblance of these three elements is somewhat obscured. We cannot say which, if either, is the parent story, or whether the stories are collaterals, and variants descended from

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*The story of the concealment of the two boys under hounds' guise is the Lancelot-Lionel story, where the Dame du lac hides two kingly children from foes by actually turning them for the time into hounds. Whether this Celtic element was borrowed and added in Saxo's authority to the story (as, for instance, the Tristram *motif* was added to Grettis Saga) is uncertain but the theory is probable. In this case the original Halfdan and Harald story may have been closer still to Saxo's Amlethus. The incident of two lads avenging in their youth a murderer of their father occurs in the Icelandic family Sagas.—F. Y. P.

some widespread and early version. The latter is more likely; but the existence of this version is itself conjectural. The comparison only establishes that Saxo's tale of Amleth is parallel in its three chief elements to an *Icelandic* saga, which concerns a historical king, Hrolf Kraki, included by Saxo in his Danish list (Bk. ii), but represented by him as living at a period long before Amleth.

But Amleth attracted writers in Norse after Saxo. Two sagas, as yet unedited, remain in MS. at Copenhagen. The first, Amlódasaga Hardvendilssona, is a free manipulation of Saxo's, and is probably made from Vedel's Danish translation of 1575. In the second, called Ambales-saga, or Amlódasaga, and written after the Reformation, the original tale is half-effaced by romantic elements. Ambales, son of Salman, King of Cimbria, was called Amlódi, "because he lay continually in the fire-hall opposite the ash-heap." He (i) escapes from an invading usurper by (ii) sham madness, while his elder brother, who is more simple, is killed. The usurper (iii) marries perforce Ambales' mother, Amba. Ambales does nothing but "fashion (iv) very small spits from hard wood, and when they seemed ready he left them in a corner near the fire-house." He also gives strange answers, and when asked where he felt the death of his father worst, he said "Sorest behind." There is (v) an eavesdropper, whom, hidden under the queen's bed, Ambales kills. He is then sent to Tamerlane, but (vi) on the way changes the names in the death-warrant, so that (vii) the messengers are killed. He (viii) marries Tamerlane's daughter, and goes back for vengeance.

In (ix) fool's guise he creeps into the hall, (x) nails down the clothes of the company with his pegs, and (xi) sets fire to the hall. The rest is fighting and fairy tales. There is no doubt that this is a form of Saxo's tale; the question is, whether it bears traces of being partly drawn from any source different from his.

Now an interesting and undoubted variant of this last tale has been found in modern Icelandic folk-lore. The tale of Brjám relates how an Ahab-like king coveted, not the vineyard, but the cow of a poor man. His servants kill the man and the two elder sons. "They asked the children where they felt the pain sorest. All clapped their breasts save Brjám, who clapped his hinderlands and grinned." The others are killed, but he is (i) spared as witless, and his mother makes him a sorcerer. He (ii) fosters revenge, and in the end goes (iii) to a feast of the king, having previously got and wrought at (iv) some wooden pegs, like Amleth's crooks. Asked their use, he (v) says, "to avenge daddy" (hefna papa), but is derided. Pointing these with steel, he (vi) fastens the feasters to the benches while they drink. They grow angry and slay one another. Brjám then marries the princess and (vii) becomes king.

It will be seen that the two stories have several points in common which are not in Saxo, especially the killing of the elder brother and sparing of the younger, who feigns madness, together with the answer of the latter. As Dr. Detter points out, the two when put together supply many of the traits of Amleth, such as his answer that he will avenge his father. I do not, however, follow his conclusion that we have here a composition independent of Saxo, which has even preserved some motives of the Brutus-story lacking in Saxo. The Brutus story of which it is time now to speak, may have been known to and have influenced the makers of this version, which yet may have rested mainly upon Saxo. (Before passing on it is worth noting that Saxo's tale was trolled far and wide in popular song at the end of the fifteenth century. The Danish Rime-Chronicle, ascribed to Niels of Sorö, and published in 1495, follows Saxo only, and casts every essential incident into its running doggerel. It brings in nothing new.)

But other elements in Saxo's tale take us back to Roman story. When Amleth has caused the King of England to hang Feng's messengers, he makes out their death to be a grievance, exacts gold for were-gild, and pours it molten into hollow staves. Asked on his return where the men are, he points to the staves, and says, "There are both." This he does partly to increase his repute for madness, partly on his principle of telling the literal truth.

This, together with the feigned madness, constitutes so striking a likeness between the tales of Amleth and Brutus, as to prove their connection. Belleforest and the old commentators were fond of making a comparison; we see a relationship. The Roman tale is found in Livy, Valerius Maximus, besides Dionysius of Halicarnassus, each of whom gives his own colouring and his own turn to it. Valerius we know that Saxo read; and there are also traits which occur in Saxo and Livy, but not in Valerius.

They leave Delphi, and the well-known tale follows of Brutus kissing his mother earth. Brutus does not throw off the mask till the death of Lucretia, when he suddenly vows that kings shall cease at Rome, and gives his friends the suicide's knife; they "wonder at the marvel, whence was this strange wit in the breast of Brutus." The sequel shows him dethroning the tyrant, and elected one of the first consuls.

Such is the story of Livy. The points to note are these: (i) The uncle, a usurper, who has already killed a son of the old king, now slays one of his own nephews who is spirited and unwary, and (ii) persecutes the other, who (iii) escapes by seeming doltish. This nephew then (iv) goes on an errand with two companions, who think him foolish; he (v) puts gold in his sticks by kissing the earth; he (vi) outwits his companions, he awakens up on emergency; he (vii) matures revenge and works it; he (viii) succeeds to power. These likenesses to Saxo's tale are clear; but Saxo, there is no doubt, knew the story best from his favourite, Valerius Maximus.

Valerius, therefore, adds nothing to Livy, but on the contrary reduces and dries up his story. Dionysius of Halicarnassus' account of the matter may be considerably shortened. Here, Brutus's father and brother have been murdered by Tarquin. "Brutus being young and wholly without support, undertook the wisest possible project: he libelled himself with an assumption of folly; and he from that time forth continually kept up the pretence of being stupid, whence he received this surname, and this saved him from suffering any harm at the hands of the tyrant, while many good men perished." Tarquin then takes away his goods, and keeps him with his children to be their butt. They visit Delphi, and, after hearing the oracle, "they presented offerings to the god, and mocked much at Brutus because he offered to Apollo a wooden stick; but he had bored it through like a flute, and put in it a rod of gold, without any man knowing." The usual sequel is repeated. Later, on being made consul, he harangues the Romans in a way reminding us of Amleth, explaining how he had assumed the mien of a man distracted, and had seemed a fool. This feature, absent in Livy and Valerius, is the only one that raises a possibility (quite remote) of Dionysius having reached Saxo through some epitome or Latinised citations.

These points of likeness are apparent. Another is the *name* of Amleth, Amlódi. Like Brutus, it means dull or foolish. Vigfússon (*Icel. Dict.* s. v.) conjecturally connects it with an Anglo-Saxon word *homola,* which occurs once in the laws of Alfred, and which he translates "fool;" But Bosworth and Toller give up the meaning of *homola.* Vigfússon gives as a secondary modern meaning, "an imbecile, weak person, one of weak bodily frame, unable to do work, not up to the mark. 'You are a great Amlódi, that is, a weak fellow, poor fool.' " Compounds carry out his idea, *amlóda-skapr,* for instance, meaning imbecility. Aasen (Norsk Ordbog, 1877) gives *amlod* in a modern Norwegian dialect as a pestering fool, *amlode* to pester foolishly.

The reference in Snæbiorn's verse to an Oceanic Amlódi clearly shows that the word as a proper name is

200 years older than Saxo. Nor is there anything in that verse to show that this being was stupid. The name, therefore, may be guessed to have gained its connotation of "stupid" (and thence to have entered the language) from the story Saxo knew and repeated. The prince was not called Amleth because he feigned stupidity; but, because Amleth did so, his name came to mean "stupid." The view, therefore, that the name of Amleth is a deliberate translation of the word Brutus into Norse, is unnecessary.

But is the *story,* as Dr. Detter holds, an immigrant version of the Brutus-story, "transformed and taken up as the Hamlet-saga into Norse literature?" "We find it," he says, "in the Skald Snæbiorn, in the verse Edda, and in the saga of Hrólf Kraki. In the twelfth century Saxo Grammaticus works it up. The saga wanders to the extreme north of Europe, where we find it as Ambales-saga, and where it has survived till to-day in the folk-tale of Brjám." On this view, the skeleton at least of the story is directly taken from the Latin classics, while the Norse elements are so many accretions. Certainly the likenesses between the Brutus tale and the sundry forms of the Amleth tale are remarkable; and to do this theory justice they may be recapitulated. They are: (i) the usurping uncle; (ii) the persecuted nephew; (iii) his loss of his elder brother, and own escape; (iv) his feigned madness, which deceives everybody; (v) his going on a journey; (vi) his maturing of revenge; (vii) his putting gold in the stick; (viii) his punishing his foes; and (ix) his coming to power.

But we must also bear in mind the many features in Saxo alone which have no analogue at all in any shape of the Latin story. They are (i) the part played by the prince's mother; (ii) the plans against him; (iii) all his devices, besides the sticks, to baulk them; (iv) the part played by the prototypes of Ophelia and Polonius; (v) the whole fashion of revenge, and (vi) the entire chapter of Amleth's adventures in England.

With the element represented in the classics, therefore, an equally large element, presumably Norse, is found in combination. The question is, how the apparently classic element came in? Did Saxo find it there, or did he put it there? A strong presumption that he put in some of it, is found in the episode of the sticks filled with gold. This was in Valerius, whom he habitually read. Also, given a story to his hand with any resemblance to that of Brutus, he would be strongly tempted to improve the resemblance, and probably did so. But, in that case, how much he added from other sources, or his own fancy, it is impossible to guess. Even that unknown amount of resemblance to the Brutus story which Saxo found and did not make, may be due to many causes. There is no need to assume an infiltration of the classic saga. The motive may have been part of the general European fund, of which the Latin and Norse versions may be separate offshoots. We cannot yet tell. Likewise, it is impossible to determine how far Saxo found the Danish* ele-

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*There is no doubt that (as Dr. Olrik points out, *Kild. til Sakses Old Historie*, p. 132; Kong. Nord. Oldsk., 1892) that the forms Amlethus (Jutish) and Hermintruda (German) point to Danish origin, as do the local associations, the anonymity of many of the personages (un-Icelandic), and other traits of the story, the absence of verse for instance.—F. Y. P.

ment and the Icelandic elements already united, and how far (if at all) he united them himself. We can only say that a tradition, connected first with a mythical Norse name, and with Icelandic sagas early and late, is by Saxo attached to a prince of Jutland, and bears traces of classical influence; and further, that Saxo had different versions before him which he sifted. It may be objected this is merely to restate the problem we began with; and so it is. But, with the facts before us, we can at least shun licence of hypothesis. And we really know too little—though this also has been a ground teeming with hypothesis—of the degree to which Saxo habitually altered his materials, to justify us in decomposing his saga further.*

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*There is a type of old story occurring in Great Britain and Ireland, which relates how a wicked king usurps a kingdom. The hero, pretending to be a fool, executes vengeance by letting in the water of the sea upon the king and his palace and realm, which is sunk under the waves, only appearing now and then at low tides or by fragments dragged up by fishermen's anchors. There is a woman of the Ophelia type, apparently, in some versions of the story (see *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, i. 302, 310; ii. 59, 353). Now, there are several marked indications of *sea-influence* in this Amlethus story; his remarks touching the rudder smack of the sea. Snæbiorn speaks of his mill and the sand his meal. He kills his foes by a net which trammels them. There is the feigned madness, the usurper, the woman, common elements in both. Is it not possible that the original Amlethus took vengeance by water, not by fire? Is not this folk-tale, the Sea-Hamlet, one of the ground-elements in Saxo's story? The "riddles" (which might originally have been in verse), must be part of the original story; they are not Saxo's inventions, in our judgment.

NOTE.—Since the above was in type, Professor Rhys has kindly sent us a summary of an unpublished Irish tale copied by him from Bodley MS. Laud 610 (foll. 96-7), of the same general kind as the story given in section 5, though no kinship can be supposed. There is (i) a rightful heir (ii) reared by his foster-father, and (iii) in the end dispossessing an usurper. The heir (iv) gives a wise answer. The story in its other features touches rather the great class that deals with *princes reared among beasts*, like William of Palerne. We are glad to print Professor Rhys' summary here, as being of interest in a book on folk-lore:—

"The battle of Magh Mucruimhe was fought between Art, King of Ireland, and Mac Con. The latter had been banished, and returned with allies from Britain. They invaded Connaught, and Magh Mucruimhe is supposed by O'Curry (*MS. Materials*, p. 43) to be between Athenree and Galway, and he guesses the date to have been 195 A. D. Irish history speaks of it as a great battle, and, as usual in Irish story, the great leaders slept with young women of distinction the night before going to the battle, that they might leave issue. Several of the latter figure in Irish story. This was the case with Art, the King of Ireland; he fell in the battle, leaving Achtan, the maid with whom he slept, with child. In due time the child was born: it was a boy, and was named Cormac—the celebrated Cormac Mac Airt he became. After the battle Mac Con usurped the kingly power, and ruled at Tara for thirty years, when he was superseded by Cor Mac Airt. I ought to have said that Mac Con was related to Art: he appears to have been the son of his sister.

"Now as to Cormac's story. When he was born, five spells were sung over him, to defend him against (1) wounds, (2) drowning, (3) fire, (4) brevity of life (?), (5) wolves. [In fact, he died an old man, choked by a salmon-bone, at the wish of a Druid who became angry with him for becoming Christian.] When he was a young child, a she-wolf carried Cormac away from his mother's side, and the beast suckled him, till a certain man found him running with the cubs of the she-wolf. He caught him and fed him for a year, when his mother Achtan heard of it, and came for the child. The man gave her the child, and told her the story of his finding it. He sent her away secretly when he discovered that the child was son of Art, as he felt that he was risking his own life if this reached the ears of Mac Con, the King of Tara.

"Achtan and her child went to the North of Ireland to the foster-father of Art, and on her way she was attacked by a pack of wolves, which were, however, diverted by a herd of deer attracting their attention. At the house of Art's foster-father the mother and child remained, and Cormac was brought up there till he was thirty years of age. Then he was equipped with the sword, the gold ring, and the raiment of his father, and sent alone to Tara. At the gates of Tara Cormac found a man disputing with a woman, who was weeping bitterly, whereupon Cormac made for the man, and drew his sword. The man proved to be Nechtan, the King's steward, and in spite of his remonstrance he had to surrender. Whereupon Cormac bound him to grant him a boon: the boon proved to be that he was to say nothing at the Court of Tara about him (Cormac). This granted, Cormac inquired why the woman was weeping, and the steward replied that she wept because that she did not like a judgment pronounced by the King, namely, that she was to forfeit her sheep for the damage they had done by grazing on the Queen's lawn. It were more just, said Cormac, that the one fleecing [the wool of the sheep] should be taken as indemnity for the other [the grazing the sheep had done]. The steward reported this to the King, who exclaimed that the man who said that was to be his successor on the throne of Tara, adding, 'If there be a man of the race of Art in Erinn, it is that man.' Mac Con thereupon quitted Tara, and left it and the kingdom in the hands of Cormac."

APPENDIX III.

LAST NEWS OF STARCAD.

THE TALE OF THORSTAN SHIVER (*Flatey-book*, i. 416).—It is told that the summer after King Olaf (Tryggwason) went to guest quarters east over the Wick and other places about. He took quarters at the homestead that is called Rain. He had a good many men with him. There was a man then with the king whose name was Thorstan, the son of Thorkell, the son of Asgar ædicoll, the son of Audun shackle, an Icelander, and he had come to the king the winter before.

In the evening, as men sat over the drink-tables, King Olaf said that no man of his men was to go alone into the hall by night: and that anyone who wished to go should call his bedfellow with him; or else, he said, he would not permit it. Men now drank well the evening through, and when the drink-table was off men went to bed. And as the night wore on, Thorstan the Icelander woke, and was minded to get out of his berth; but he that lay beside him was sleeping so soundly that Thorstan would not at all wake him. He stood up and slipped his shoes on his feet and took a thick rug over him and walked to the draught-house. It was a big house, and set so that eleven men could sit on either side. He sat down on the nearest seat. And when he had sat there a little while he saw a puck come up out of the inmost seat and sit down there. Then said Thorstan, "Who is come there?" The fiend answereth, "Here is come Thorkell the thin that fell at Bra-field with King Harald War-tooth." "Whence comest thou now?" quoth Thorstan. He said he was come fresh from hell. "What canst tell me about it?" asked Thorstan. He answereth, "What wilt thou know about?" "Who beareth his pain best in Hell?" "None better," quoth the puck, "than Sigurd Fafnesbane." "What pain hath he?" "He kindleth the burning oven," saith the ghost. "That seemeth not to me so great a pain," saith Thorstan. "That is not so," quoth the puck, "for he himself is the kindling." "Then it is great," quoth Thorstan. "But who beareth his pain the worst?" The ghost answereth, "Starcad the old beareth it worst, for he will be whooping so that it is greater punishment to us fiends than well-nigh all else, inasmuch as we can get no rest for his whooping." "What punishment hath he, then?" quoth Thorstan, "that he beareth so ill, so stout a man as he hath been called?" "He hath his ankles afire." "That doth not seem to me so much," said Thorstan, "for such a champion as he hath been." "It is not acounted so little," quoth the ghost, "for only the soles of his feet stand up out of the fire." "That is a great punishment," quoth Thorstan," "and do thou whoop a whoop like him?" "So it shall be," quoth the puck. Then he cast asunder the chaps on him and set up a great howl. But Thorstan pulled the skirt of the rug over his head. He was right ill at ease with that whoop, and he spake, "Doth he whoop his biggest whoop so?" "Far from it," quoth the ghost, for that is the whoop of a paltry little devil like me." "Whoop a little like Starcad," quoth Thorstan. "That may well be," quoth the puck. Then he betook him to whooping a second time, and so frightfully that it was a wonder to Thorstan how so small a fiend could make such a mighty howl. Thorstan did as before; he wrapped the rug about his head and covered him so, nevertheless a swoon came over him so that he lost his senses. Then the puck asked, "Why art thou silent?" Thorstan answered, "I was silent because I was wondering what a mighty power of noise there is in thee, so small a puck as methinks thou art. And is that the biggest whoop of Starcad?" "It is no nearer it," saith he; "it is rather the least of his whoops." "Put it off no more," quoth Thorstan, "and let me hear his biggest whoop." The puck agreed thereto. Thorstan made him ready against it, and drew the rug together, and so turned it over his head and held it outside with his two hands. The ghost had moved up toward Thorstan about three seats with each whoop, and there were now only three seats between them. Then the puck puffed out his chaps fearfully, and rolled his eyes, and began to howl so loud that Thorstan thought it passed all measure.

And at that nick a bell rang in the place, and Thorstan fell forward senseless down on to the floor. But the puck, when he heard the noise of the bell, was so moved that he sank down through the floor, and one might long hear the booming of *him* down in the earth. Thorstan soon came to himself, and stood up and walked to his berth and lay down.

And in the morning men got up, the king went to church and heard the hours. After that they walked to table. The king was not very blithe. He took up his speech, "Did any man go alone to the draught-house last night?" Thorstan then stood up and bowed down before the king, and said that he had broken his command. The king answereth, "It hath not so greatly offended me: but thou showest what is told of you Icelanders, that ye are very self-willed. But didst see anything?" Thorstan told him then the whole story as it had happened. The king asked, "What didst think when he whooped?" "I will tell thee, Lord, I thought I could tell from thy having warned all men not to go thither alone, when the bogey came up, that we should not part without scathe. But I thought that thou wouldst waken, Lord, when he whooped, and I thought if thou should learn to know of it, I should then be holpen." "It was so," said the king, "that I woke with it and thereby I knew what was going on, wherefor I had the bell rung, for I knew that thou couldst not otherwise endure. But wast not afraid when the puck began to whoop?" Thorstan answered, "I know not what it is to be afraid." "Was never fear in thy breast?" said the king. "Never," said Thorstan, "though with that last whoop a shiver well-nigh shot into my breast." Answereth the king, "Now thy name shall be eked, and thou called Thorstan Shiver henceforward. And here is a sword that I will give thee as a name-fastening." Thorstan thanked him. It is told that Thorstan became a court-man of King Olaf's, and was with him him afterwards, and fell with other of the king's champions on the Long Serpent.

"AND THE END WAS EVER TO DO WELL."

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